The Crown Series

THE MASTER OF DEEPLAWN

Hattie E. Colter

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The Master of Deeplawn. Page 5.

"The lad looked eagerly for the reply."

THE

MASTER OF DEEPLAWN

BY

MRS. HATTIE E. COLTER

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THE MASTER OF DEEPLAWN

CHAPTER I

FROM PRISON BARS

THE night was falling, and its gloomy shadows began to fill a long and somewhat sombre room. That it was a library could be seen by a glance at the hundreds of volumes lining the walls from floor to ceiling.

A lad of fourteen lay face downward on a rug before the fire, his elbows resting on a huge book, whose illuminated pages he had been intently studying. The tome was more than a hundred years old, and his attention had been directed to it by his tutor because of the excellent specimens of ancient wood engraving which it contained. He had turned page after page with deepening interest until he was arrested at the eleventh chapter of Matthew, where from his cheerless prison John sent this question to the Christ: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" The lad looked eagerly for the reply made by the Master:

"Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses."

He paused to think and a sudden rush of light, in no way related to the murky twilight, filled his mind. He had been a studious lad, loving books and eager to explore their secrets, but at the same time indulging a very decided relish for the luxuries which from his infancy he had found ready provided for him. He had only one brother—a man grown and out in the great world, eager to secure his full share of the good things of life in his too brief passage through it. Their parents were dead, and to each had been allotted the portion of worldly goods secured for them by the thrift and industry of departed ancestors; in Alan's case this could not be touched until he came of age, save the necessary expenses for suitably bringing him up. Reginald, the older brother, decided that the safest place for the lad was at his own home, under a painstaking tutor. At the schools he had himself acquired tastes which, although now as much a part of his being as his hands or feet and as hard to sever, his inherent good sense convinced him would better never have been learned. He had considerable affection for this younger brother, which was returned in full measure, and it would have been an exceedingly bitter experience to him to have Alan know the life he led in its minute particulars. He could remember with perfect clearness the gentle mother who had so long ago faded out of life, and whose words still came to him, at times, with painful distinctness.

The maid entered the room with lights, and seeing Alan lying so quietly before the fire, fancied he was asleep and softly withdrew. A moment later he lifted the Bible and carried it to the table, anxious to find what more had been said by this wonderful Christ. He looked again at the picture of the rugged prophet gazing upward, beyond the prison bars, as if he were reveling once more in the freedom of those vast desert solitudes he had loved so well, upward to the regions whither his spirit was so soon to take its sudden and joyous flight. Alan read over again those words, catching at once their hidden meaning, and then turned back to the third chapter, fascinated by this prophet-hero, so indifferent to his housing and fare, and who had such power with God and with his fellow-men; and whom afterward Christ pronounced the peer of the highest. He hunted up the marginal references, eager to learn everything concerning him, but was disappointed that the biographers of that age dealt so sparingly in personalities; and the history ended at the pitiable tragedy where the over-scrupulous king kept his word at such heavy cost.

When the dinner bell rang he was still poring over the Bible, and at the table he was so silent that his tutor asked if he was not well. His reply in the affirmative was given in such an abstracted fashion that his tutor was puzzled to know what had come over the lad. It was the custom for them to spend an hour together in the library every evening, and another hour in the gymnasium; and then, at nine o'clock, Alan retired. On this particular evening he went direct to the table on which he had left the Bible lying open, and drawing Mr. Bruce's attention to the prophet, said:

"Shall we read to-night about the John whom Herod beheaded in the prison?"

"If you wish."

"I have been able to find very little about him here; perhaps you can tell me where to look for more."

"There is very little to learn save that which is given us in the Gospels. That is one great drawback with Scripture narratives; one must allow his own imagination to do a good deal of filling in. From the character of the people and their modes of living one can frequently do this. But one often wishes as you do for definite information he cannot get."

Mr. Bruce then went to the shelves and selected several books, but Alan soon found that it was as his tutor had said, and there was not much information to be procured; and hence when their hour's reading ended the best satisfaction Mr. Bruce could give him was that he must wait for eternity when, with those heroic souls by his side, he might learn from their own lips their earthly histories. At Alan's age this period seemed so remote that there was but small comfort in it.

CHAPTER II

ENDOWING A COLLEGE CHAIR

ALTHOUGH he was disappointed that so little could be learned about the desert prophet, Alan continued the study of his illuminated Bible with unflagging interest. His days were methodically arranged, and had been for so long a time, that he scarcely thought of questioning his tutor's right to plan his hours. Reginald highly approved of Mr. Bruce's methods, regretting that his own boyhood had not been regulated on similar principles, and Alan felt almost as if he had more than he deserved of this world's good things. They dined late, and there was always an hour before dinner which belonged entirely to him in which to amuse himself as best he liked. The maid, whose duty it was to look after the fire and lights in the library, confided to her fellow-servants her fear that Alan was not long for this world.

"He spends every bit of his play-hour poring over that old Bible," she declared. "He has it on a cushion before the fire, and he lies there reading it and studying the pictures just as if he didn't expect to live a year!"

"I've known the like before," the housekeeper responded, with an ominous shake of the head. "Boys that's going to live don't study their Bibles much; it's not according to nature."

For some time Alan's health was watched with grave anxiety by his household. The servants had considerable interest in the matter, since it was an exceptionally pleasant house, with light work and no interference in their plans by exacting employers. If he became a victim to an early death, the probabilities were that they might not get such another congenial situation. Mrs. Dixon, the housekeeper, remonstrated with him one evening, taking Jane's place in the library for the purpose.

"What do you find so interesting in that old Bible? Your brother, to my knowledge, never read a chapter all by himself in his life, and I was here years before he went away to school."

Alan looked up with a flush of pain, and replied:

"I am going to speak to Rex about it; he can't know or he would read it. It is better than all the old poets and the modern ones put together; it gives me better thoughts and more of them than everything else. I never knew till I was reading about John the Baptist what a wonderful book it is."

He laid the Bible on the library table, and then continued : "Just come and look at him in prison, and I will read what it says about him ; there is very little, but I make the rest up in my own mind. Here he is in the wilderness. When I am a man I am going there; I want to see the desert where he lived on locusts and honey; wasn't he strong to be content with such fare—I mean strong-souled ?" He stood looking down at the very unsatisfactory grouping of rocks and vast spaces of the desert with shining eyes, seeing them, not as the stolid woman at his side saw them, but with his vivid imagination giving tone and color to those peaks bathed in the warm Syrian sunshine, with the arching blue of the far heavens brooding tenderly above them, as when John thought with God and walked with him in that vanished but majestic past. Then he turned the leaves to the place where, by the waterside, the multitudes were assembled when the plainly robed figure of the Man of Sorrows came among them to be baptized of the prophet. He looked at it eagerly, as if his eyes had never before rested on that illuminated page, and then he passed on to the prison scene where John was waiting for an answer to his question. It was not merely the faded engraving at which Alan gazed ; he saw in the eager, questioning look an expectancy for that for which prophets and kings had longed, but died without seeing. The prison walls and the world were forgotten; the joy and wideness of his desert life were with him now; the mystery of his own message to the multitudes, its majesty and promise were still thrilling his soul.

"How grand it is!" Alan murmured, with shining eyes.

"Seems to me it's a terrible gloomy sort of a picture. I'd a sight sooner look at a chromo," was the response.

The lad looked disappointed, but turned to the last picture in the series; there was the same calm brow and serene face, with no trace of the death-agony, as the head was borne on the platter by the shrinking girl to her cruel mother.

"People's hearts in them times was crueller than they are now. I am sure if any one belonging to me had the chance of asking a gift from a king, I wouldn't tell them to ask for a poor prisoner's head, for 'twouldn't be any earthly use."

"It is men like that who make our world great; no matter how they die, they are living somewhere," was Alan's softly spoken reply.

"Oh, yes, I reckon folks keep right on living somewhere after they leave here, but it must be dreadful uncomfortable getting on without one's body."

"It seems to me that will be one of the luxuries of dying; it will be so much easier getting around among the other worlds."

"If I was you I'd not be thinking about them things so much. It ain't natural for young folks." She spoke anxiously a minute later, asking: "Do you ever cough any?"

"Perhaps I do sometimes, when things go down the wrong way," returned Alan.

He spoke indifferently, as if the ills of his body were of little account. Other duties then claimed her attention, and casting an anxious look at the lad who had again begun reading, Mrs. Dixon left the room.

Alan was beginning to feel the solitariness of his new thoughts. His tutor could converse more intelligently on the Bible than Mrs. Dixon, but he had no more enthusiasm on the subject. His thoughts presently turned to Reginald, and he resolved to write to him, asking him to take up the study of these great characters depicted in the Scriptures, of whom there were so many. What a revelation it would be to Rex, after associating with the gay folk that, by some fine instinct, Alan knew surrounded him, to get acquainted with the strong-souled heroes who seemed to him more like gods than the quarrelsome, selfish beings about whom the old Greek and Latin poets wrote. One day he asked Mr. Bruce if it was very expensive keeping up a college. The answer was in the affirmative. Alan had no idea of the extent of his own possessions, so a few days later, after thinking the matter well over, he asked how much he himself was worth.

"You will be a rich man when you attain your majority," was the reply.

"Will I be able to have a college of my own?"

"I scarcely think so; it takes a great many thousands of dollars for that at the present day."

Later on, however, Alan learned that it was possible to establish certain chairs in the great universities. With his new ideas about the way heroes should live he concluded to do this, and meanwhile he could himself become a teacher and live as cheaply as he liked. Reginald's reply to his letter came duly, and with it the assurance that he knew all about the gentlemen referred to, and believed them to be excellent, well-meaning individuals, but hoped that Alan would not take them too seriously, since those who did so were apt to become "cranks," and were, as a rule, uncomfortable sort of people. Alan was bitterly disappointed, not so much in his brother's estimate of these majestic Hebrews, as in his brother himself. There must be something organically wrong in a person who was intimately acquainted with their lives and words and yet could write so indifferently concerning them. It intensified his desire to have the boys of coming generations better acquainted with their teachings. He was sufficiently familiar with classic literature and the usages of those remote times, to know that the old heathen to whom was entrusted the training of youth, were particularly painstaking in their methods of teaching them the worship and study of the beings whom they called the immortal gods. He grew restless to have his brother home again; it would be so much easier to talk with him than to write. He had not a facile pen, and after his severest exertions in composition he still felt that his best thoughts were unwritten. When his letter was written and sent it found Reginald in the midst of a very exciting love affair, which if neglected at that critical juncture, might utterly fail, so he wrote to say that he had just then a matter of very grave importance on hand. Alan was rejoiced to hear that he had at last begun to take matters seriously.

To humor the lad's fancy, Mr. Bruce had permitted him to take a special course of study in the history and literature of the world's early ages; the Rig Veda of the Brahmins, the Kings of the Confucians, the Sutras of the Sikhs, the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees, the Tripitaka of the Buddhists, and others of the most ancient religions, all of which he had studied with much the same eagerness that average lads absorb the lurid descriptions of scouts, pirates, and other excrescences of literature. He was certainly getting an excellent foundation laid for Oriental scholarship. As the long summer days drew on he used to take his fishing rod and a book and while waiting for the fish to attend to his bait, he would go back forty or fifty centuries, and for a while forget that he was living in an age of electricity and steam, daily papers and politics.

Deeplawn farm was patterned after the English estates. There were several hundred acres of land under a high state of cultivation, with laborers' cottages along the road at intervals. There was a fine growth of wood, through which a stream of water flowed, well stocked with fish; the water in places was quite deep and flowed silently; in others it was shallow, and here Alan liked best to do his fishing, for its murmur as it hastened to greet the sea had a music of its own. He used to speculate about those men of the elder world who had possessed little human learning, but to whom the book of nature was opened wide, revealing her heart to them as she does to but few in this feverish, discursive age. Men then had time to meditate; they were not forced to glean over vast areas; were not appalled at the threshold of knowledge by the amount to be learned, and the brief time in which to learn it; with them it was introspection rather than absorption, followed naturally by the attempt to create. To-day, with our immense equipment of literary lore, no poet is able to reach those upper notes touched so naturally by the poet who wrote the sublime epic called Job, and by some stray passages in the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and prophecies, which only the lofty musical conceptions of the great masters can express. It is mainly in this latter way that our later generations have been able to utter their highest thoughts; poetry itself fails, and only in harmony can expression be found. Forty centuries hence the wonders of our day, steam, electricity, and the multitudinous inventions to which they have been applied, will not influence those remote peoples as we are influenced by these voices from that long-vanished past. Men have gone on freighting themselves so heavily with the appliances of civilization, that thought and fancy are forced to the rear, and since life is too brief to secure both, most of us choose the former. There may be hope that future generations will grow wiser; being surfeited with materialism, they may realize that one's self, independently of his environments, is to be looked after first.

In those long hours of solitude with his books and the stories that came down to him from remote centuries, Alan found a satisfaction as distinct from that his brother sought, as the pure air of some breezy upland is different from the feverish atmosphere of the crowded slums. With quickened pulses the thought would come to him that the age for grand achievements was not gone forever. Not that he particularly craved to take his place in history; he could live heroically without so much as a newspaper notice of the fact. If he were fitted for such work God would certainly not withhold it from him. If men are the architects of their own fate, it was a palace and not a hovel he wanted to be building day by day. Just now the work which he felt called upon to do was to fit himself to fight for the Bible, to force upon men's minds their duty in reference to it, and to make it as obligatory for college students to study the Bible as the classics of Greece and Rome. Hitherto he had taken little interest in the Deeplawn tenantry. A lad now and then had been selected for playfellow in some of the games dear to a boy's heart, which could not be indulged in alone. Now as he studied his Bible there came to him a revelation of what life meant, its duties and obligations, and he resolved to begin the work that lay nearest. Like reformers generally he met with difficulties and in his own household. Mrs. Dixon asured him that their entire staff of help were church-members, and in the habit of sending a trifle every year to convert the heathen, besides supporting their own churches at home.

"Surely you did not take us for a pack of heathen?" she remarked, with considerable warmth.

"I am doubtful if you are all as good as some of the heathen I read about; you never once mentioned to me that I could be a better boy if I asked God to help me."

"That wasn't what we were hired here for."

He looked at her curiously and then said, in a reflective way, which was particularly exasperating:

"I think I would rather take their chances than yours when mankind are getting judged. I do not think either Buddha or Zoroaster would have been so indifferent under similar circumstances."

"You compare us to them dirty heathen——" She paused. Alan, although only a lad of fifteen, was more manly than many a one twice his age, and it might not be safe to go too far.

"It is not too late for you to mend. If any one is anxious to do his work well it is never too late to begin."

"I never expected to see the day that any one would throw up to me that I neglected my work."

"You did not understand my meaning. I did not mean the trifles which make up your daily round here. There is other work that will be going on when Deeplawn and the world itself will have ceased to be."

"You talk like a preacher; 'twould be curious if you'd take to the other extreme from the way Mr. Reginald took. I won't say but what it would be a good thing."

When Alan spoke in a general way she rather enjoyed his remarks, but Mrs. Dixon did not relish preaching of a directly personal nature when she comprised the audience.

"I am going to try to live as well as some of those old heathen who had only shadows to walk in where I have clear light."

CHAPTER III

MR. DOLLIVER

THERE was a small chapel at Deeplawn, where ministers of any evangelical church were welcome to preach as long as they did not interfere with each other's appointments. For the most part the tenants were a church-going people, hence there was usually a fair congregation to welcome the preacher. It is true they sometimes got a mingling of doctrines, but this may have been a help, since it broadened the sympathies of the listeners when they found that in the main the same doctrines were held by all the great churches.

Alan had been in the habit of accompanying his tutor into the town on the Lord's Day, joining the worshipers in a fine building, with stained-glass windows, pipe organ, and the luxurious appointments usual in a wealthy church; but now he decided to join the humble congregation on his own property. It was certainly an act of self-denial to forego the exhilarating canter into the city on horseback, the mingling with the pleasant-looking company of people and listening to the eloquent sermon, the saunter in the park after dinner with his tutor, and then the ride home in the evening. Mr. Bruce looked surprised when, one bright morning in May, Alan informed him that he was going to church with his tenants.

"Surely not this morning, above all others, when the roadside along the way is one huge bouquet of apple blossoms! It is as good as a sermon to pass through them," he remonstrated.

"I am sorry to miss them, but my mind is made up. You will please excuse me."

Mr. Bruce did not attempt to argue; he was beginning to find that what the lad thought was his duty he would carry out at any cost. When Alan entered the church and glanced around at the bare floors and uncushioned seats, he could not help speculating what some of the old heathen would say to him, if they could step across from other worlds, for permitting the worship of the immortal gods to be carried on in such rude fashion. He forgot to notice the looks of curiosity that greeted him while he began planning improvements that should be entered upon at once. As he glanced through the widows he resolved there should be no colored glass inserted to shut out those delicious glimpses of sky and cloud and hilltops. Before one window an adventurous apple tree concealed every other view with its satin petals and green leaves. Along every stage of its unfolding and decay he fancied it would be more a thing of beauty than the figures of the stained glass even, with blossom and fruit and the bare branches outlined against a wintry sky. While the choir sang to the wheezy accompaniment of a reed organ that had long outlived its usefulness, he ceased to listen to the sounds that jarred discordantly on his ear, but instead watched a bird far up in the sky brought out in relief against the deep blue. Years after, in the midst of keen activities and the world's din, one of memory's most peaceful pictures was the scene he looked at that day. The preacher was an old man, with silver hair and a face so serene that Alan wondered if he had ever come in contact with sin and sorrow. There was something in his face and bearing which brought vividly to his mind the desert prophet. In his prayer there were few set phrases, but there was adoration as well as supplication, and toward the close he broke into joyous exultation as he referred to the joys awaiting God's hidden ones on the other side of death. Alan felt a mist gathering in his eyes as he listened. Later on he learned that the aged minister could count his treasures in another world only; wife and children were all gathered there, while old and homeless he could still go rejoicing on his way. As he preached, Alan felt, as seldom before, that the Bible is true, and goodness the highest possible attainment for man. After the benediction he tarried to invite the minister to dinner, thinking too, that perhaps he might stay and rest at Deeplawn for a few days. Speaking to him he noticed that he looked worn and his garments were threadbare. The invitation was accepted, and as the two walked home through the aisle of trees that bordered the path and interlaced overhead, they were both silent. At luncheon Alan asked the aged minister if he could not remain over night or perhaps stay a few days. The look of pleasure that passed over the worn face touched the lad's heart.

"It would give me great pleasure to do so. I have often looked up at this house and thought I should like to be within its walls, but my way has lain, for the most part, among humble folk; your people too, belonged to another communion."

"That should make no difference."

"No, for we are all children of one Father; I thank him that my eyes have been opened to see that the difference is very largely in name: 'other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring!'" He quoted the words softly, scarce thinking the lad would understand what he meant.

"Who said that?" Alan asked, eagerly.

"The Master himself; so it is true, it is true." He repeated the words as if he found them exceedingly comforting.

"It may mean all, everywhere among other peoples than Christians, who long to live right," Alan suggested, thoughtfully.

"Yes, all of them. I did not think so once, but God has shown me better. I am learning that he judges by the heart rather than by the knowledge."

"I am very glad to hear you say that."

"Is it possible that you have begun to think about these great problems?"

The old man bent a keen look on the handsome face opposite, which hitherto he had regarded as somewhat stern and imperious, certainly not a youth given to meditating on the attractions of theology; it seemed as if nature had intended him for a fighter rather than for a dreamer.

"Are they not the highest questions we can study—the most important?" There was an added flush on the ruddy cheek as Alan asked the question.

"Some divines nowadays try to convince us that the fall in Eden was a fall upward, but with my experience with mankind, I am led to believe that we have received a terrible blow somewhere. I have the effects of it in myself. Our true evolution begins when we come back to God; we are away from him—we must be born anew to get back to him."

Alan presently broke the silence by a still more surprising question. "Was that what Christ meant when he said to Nicodemus: 'Ye must be born again'?"

"Yes."

"I am trying to comply with the requirements given by him."

"Who has taught you?" was the astonished question.

"No one; I was looking through the Bible when I stumbled on the truth."

"It is a most unusual circumstance."

"It should not be. I have been studying the sacred books of other great religions, giving all a fair chance; but I find the Bible different from all the others."

"It was a dangerous experiment for a lad to study all those misleading lights."

"No; the contrast only drew me the closer to our own religion. I have been surprised that men should begin doubting because there were mysteries. I like to know there are such. I am not anxious to know all things, not even in eternity. I want always to be going on in the solution of these mysteries but never to overtake all knowledge."

Mr. Dolliver sat watching him with a curious intentness. Here surely, he thought, is one for whom the Master has some especial work. It did not occur to him that there was any career for him except to become a preacher.

After luncheon Alan took Mr. Dolliver to the library. The windows were open to the ground, and there floated through them the busy twittering of the birds along with the exhalations of the apple blossoms. Mr. Dolliver cast a hungry glance around the book-lined walls and on the tables that stood loaded with current magazines, reviews, and newspapers, and then he sank into a leather-covered chair with a sigh of deep content.

"This comes nearest to my ideal of heaven of any place I get into save a revival meeting," he remarked, with another leisurely survey of the room. "My young brother, the Lord has been very good to you."

"Do you not have all the books you want?" Alan asked.

"Oh, no." He spoke quietly as if that were quite out of the question.

"I fancied whatever else might be wanting, preachers would be well supplied with literature," returned Alan.

"That has been one of my greatest privations. Years ago I did not so much mind going poorly clad and not too well fed; it was the being starved mentally, the hunger for what I knew was to be had but for my poverty, that grieved me. I have grown used to it now; the end is not far off and then I shall never know hunger of any kind again; besides God has provided me other fare."

"If you will permit me, I shall see that you never want for anything again in this world." Alan spoke modestly; he seemed timid of offering charity. Ministers, of late, no matter of what church or quality, had impressed him as a superior type of beings. Mr. Dolliver looked at him in a puzzled way as he returned, "I do not understand your meaning."

He could not comprehend that Alan was offering him right of way for life in that magnificent library, with food and shelter added.

"Where do you live?"

"I have no particular home. God has taken to himself all my loved ones. I am waiting till he bids me come."

"Where do you keep your books and household stuff?"

"One trunk easily holds my worldly store. I have not tried to lay up for myself. God knew all about me, so I have given everything I could spare to make this a better world; it may be I have been unwise, some have told me so, but I felt safe to trust him. If no other way is open he will make room for me up there."

He was gazing calmly up along the blue highway we all instinctively feel leads heavenward.

"Won't you come and stay with me? You can preach and visit all you wish, but let this be home; we have guest-chambers enough to entertain a score of visitors."

"Your friends—what will they say? I am not of your church and only an old man that the world holds but lightly."

"My brother is the only one to interfere; he lets me do just what I like."

The tears were stealing down the furrowed cheeks while, with lifted eyes, the aged pilgrim murmured brokenly his thanks to God; such a lifting of care from his heart could only find relief in that way. To Alan the spirit world had never before seemed so real and the presence of the infinite love so close and tender. Mr. Dolliver went to church that evening through the mellow glow of the sunset, feeling as if just beyond the golden western bars the shining of the city's walls where dwelt his loved ones, might almost be seen. All the loneliness of life seemed to have fallen from him, there was nothing further to dread, and God had been faithful to the trust committed to him. With a miser's economy, and the closing of his heart against every charity, he could not have secured such a home as this in which to go down into the valley of old age. He had only craved the simplest fare and housing, but the Heavenly Father had seen fit to give him something far better.

Alan accompanied him, listening to the sermon with something of a feeling of proprietary right in it, while he would as soon have thought of criticising the sunshine as the old man's preaching and prayers.

CHAPTER IV

ADAM ROSS

WHEN Mr. Bruce came down to breakfast the following morning he was surprised to see a fine, patriarchal face opposite him. Alan went through the presentation somewhat diffidently, and later on, when he explained to his tutor that Mr. Dolliver was not merely the guest of a night, but was to remain during the rest of his life, Mr. Bruce looked first amused and then perplexed.

"What will your brother say to such a Quixotic arrangement?"

"It is as much my home as his; I do not interfere with his pleasures, and they cost much more than mine."

"You will not then consult him in the matter?"

"I'll mention what I have done, that is all."

Mr. Bruce noticed the subtle change that was taking place in his pupil—the boyish outlines were developing into a vigorous strength, foreshadowing a manhood with fixed purpose.

Gradually they grew into the habit of considering Mr. Dolliver as much a member of the family as if he had always been there; the servants all liked him, and were as ready to welcome him back from his pilgrimages as Alan himself, for he still continued to go from place to place, visiting the sick and neglected and preaching to all who would come to hear him. He was not calculated to draw crowds with his preaching, and he used to say that in one way the Master could not sympathize with some of his messengers, for the people had listened to him gladly, themselves making the preaching appointments by thronging in such crowds to his remote hiding-places that he was compelled to speak to them.

Mr. Dolliver had never thought of ceasing to preach because of his slender congregations, and a score of listeners would make him content. He was falling now into the gentle childhood of the aged Christian, which sometimes comes when the storms of life are over and God lets them rest awhile before entering upon the splendid activities of immortality. It was only natural that, as he went his rounds in the pony carriage drawn by the steady horse Alan had provided him, he should make frequent and enthusiastic mention of the lad who was becoming almost more than a son to him. He did not spend much of his time at Deeplawn. He would come driving home with a beaming face from a long round of preaching in neglected places, apparently very glad to get back to his books and home, stay a few days, and then with the same happy look on his face start out again.

Mr. Bruce would unbend on these occasions from his usual dignified indifference to rural matters to listen to the old man's stories. He had few complaints to make, but seemed to have a faculty for drawing out what good there was in people, while he thought so little of himself in reference to his work that it was much the same to him whether he was treated with honor or the reverse. Alan used to listen to him with glowing eyes, while the heroes of the older world seemed to look at him out of that dim face.

And so the days wore on until three years had gone. During that time Reginald had made two flying visits home, for the place was so dull that a single night there was to him an act of penance. Alan never urged him now to come, for he had awakened to the reality : his brother, who used to be the hero of his boyhood, now impressed him as devoid of a single heroic characteristic ; this discovery had been a grief more bitter than death to the high-principled youth.

Reginald made his appearance again very unexpectedly one bright June day. Mr. Bruce and Alan had planned a pedestrian tour in the Adirondacks, and Alan was still boy enough to be anticipating the trip with great satisfaction. Mr. Dolliver was at home for the first time when Reginald was there, and he was surprised not to meet him at the dinner table, while he wondered that a robust young man should be so overcome by a day's travel as to be compelled to take his bed. He dressed the following morning with unusual care, for he had a little natural anxiety about meeting the head of the house, but to his surprise when he went down to the breakfast room he found as usual only Mr. Bruce and Alan.

"Is your brother sick?" he asked.

"I do not think he is," was Alan's brief reply.

The servants came in to prayers after breakfast, and then each went about the day's accustomed tasks, while Mr. Dolliver betook himself to the library with an anxious mind. He felt in the very atmosphere that there was trouble, and that too, in some way connected with Reginald's home-coming. He had always found the best antidote for trouble to be to aid some one more troubled. Mrs. Dixon had mentioned to him the unhappy case of an old ditcher living near, who was sick and alone. He took his hat and cane and started out in the bright sunshine for old Adam Ross' cottage. It was doubtful if he would be admitted, since he had several times attempted to get in, but had been always repulsed. Adam Ross hated nearly everything, and if he had any pet dislike it was for ministers of the gospel. Mr. Dolliver had taken some nourishing food from Mrs. Dixon as a sort of peace offering. He found a desperate state of affairs at the cottage when he arrived.

Adam had been alone for a day or two with scarcely strength to reach for a drink of water from the table at his bedside. Mr. Dolliver knocked, but did not wait for an invitation to enter, and pushed boldly in. The sight that met his view was a pitiful one: the haggard face on the pillow, the disordered room, and swarms of flies holding undisputed possession in the close atmosphere.

"I thought I was going to be left to die here like a rat in a hole," was the first querulous greeting.

"The Lord was better to you than you expected."

"It's never much good I've got from anybody; but make haste and fetch me some fresh water. I've not had bite nor sup of anything but this drop of stale water since day before yesterday."

Mr. Dolliver hastened to the well and brought in a jug of cold water. The sick man took a deep draught and then sank heavily back on his pillow. "That does taste good," he murmured, with something like gratitude.

"Will you have something to eat now?" Mr. Dolliver asked, after he had opened door and windows, and with considerable exertion and the aid of a newspaper lessened the number of flies.

"If I had anything fit to eat I wouldn't mind trying."

The self-appointed nurse wiped a plate and emptied the basket; there were jellies, cold chicken, thin slices of bread and butter, and other delicacies. Adam's face brightened as he saw the good things.

"Now, if I had a cup of tea, with some of that cream in it, I'd be quite set up," he remarked, with unwonted amiability. Mr. Dolliver kindled the fire and set the tea to steep. He was unaccustomed to such efforts, and burned his fingers. He did not mind such trifles, however, in his satisfaction at finding Adam so complacent. When all was satisfactorily prepared, Mr. Dolliver carried the food to the sick man.

"I'm not a beggar, that folks need to send victuals to me. No doubt you begged them for me," Adam grumbled.

"They will taste just as good as if your own money bought them, or as if you had created them yourself and not been beholden to the Lord for these things and everything else you have ever had." Adam winced at that, for it had ever been his boast that he was never indebted to any one for what he had.

When he had finished his breakfast he lay down wearily and closing his eyes, said: "Now you'll be wanting to pray after all you've done for me, and I won't be so unneighborly as to shut your mouth."

Mr. Dolliver took no notice of the remark, but began to clean the untidy room, the keen eyes opening and watching him half-fiercely from the bed. When the work was done to his satisfaction he took a chair to rest, meanwhile looking around triumphantly at his housekeeping exploits.

"I never knew that women's work was so hard," he remarked, wiping the great beads of perspiration from his face. "It always looked easy, to watch them at it; my dear wife would have done this work in half the time it took me, and kept her face dry into the bargain. Women are a wonderful gift to men," he added, reflectively.

"I always kept clear of women folks; it didn't seem fair for me to have to support another man's daughter."

"That is just where we differed; it did not seem honest to take a young woman just when she was of an age to be useful to her parents and have her all to yourself, not giving anything in return. I used to think the savage nations had truer ideas of honesty in the matter than civilized people."

Adam turned uneasily in bed, and for the first time it occurred to him that he might have made some mistakes in life it was now too late to rectify. He wished the minister would pray, for he had an idea it would lessen his obligation. Ministers, he had been accustomed to think, were very thankful for an opportunity to pray with folks; and yet he did not like to make the request again, for it seemed too much like dying for him to be too anxious about such matters. Mr. Dolliver sat chatting with him, while several times Adam felt an uncomfortable moisture coming into his eyes, and every time his visitor arose to drive out the flies he seized the opportunity to make use of a corner of the quilt for a pocket-handkerchief. He wondered too, why the old man stayed so long when apparently he had no idea of converting him. At last Mr. Dolliver arose to go.

"It is nearly time for luncheon up at the house. Young Mr. Reginald is at home and I am anxious to meet him."

"As far as I can make out, he's a poor lot," Adam declared, his face brightening at the prospect of a bit of gossip. "The young chap is worth past count of him." The grieved look on the minister's face surprised him; why he should be so affected by the shortcoming of another was quite beyond his comprehension.

"One never can believe these flying rumors, especially about the rich, for people are apt to envy them."

"You can believe what I'm telling you. I don't run the risk of saying what I don't know, for truth, and getting myself fetched up for libel, only when I'm certain of it," Adam said, defensively.

Mr. Dolliver turned the conversation abruptly, promising to come down again after luncheon with some medicine and beef tea.

"I have done a good deal of doctoring in my time," he remarked, by way of recommending himself; "I have tried to save poor people's pockets as well as their lives in that way."

"I guess you are pretty good, if you are a preacher," Adam acknowledged, thereby making a concession which, if Mr. Dolliver had known him better, would have sent him on his way rejoicing.

Adam Ross did not die under Mr. Dolliver's treatment and nursing. With the aid of a fine constitution, he came around as well as ever, and not his bodily health alone was benefited. Soon another sitting was taken in the little church, and after that Mr. Dolliver had no firmer friend at Deeplawn than Adam Ross, the ditcher.

CHAPTER V

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

AT luncheon Mr. Dolliver was presented to Reginald. A cold bow was his only response to his offers of friendliness, while Mr. Bruce sat in dignified silence. Reginald sat creasing his napkin and, with a manner that struck the old man as sullen, refused to take anything on the table. Near the close of the meal he gave a low-spoken order to the servant which Alan immediately countermanded.

"Do you think you are the only master here?" Reginald asked hotly.

"I am, in some matters."

Mr. Dolliver could scarcely believe it was Alan's voice that uttered the words, for he had never heard him speak with such authority to the lowest servant on the place. They arose from the table in silence and Reginald turned to Mr. Bruce, saying haughtily:

"I should like a few words with you and my brother in the library." Mr. Bruce bowed his assent and the three left the room.

"Isn't it a pity, sir, to see a fine young man like that going to the bad?" the maid who had waited on them at table asked respectfully. "Did you see he never tasted a bite of dinner and he bid me fetch him the brandy, but Mr. Alan forbid me; he's a wonderful young man, and Mr. Reginald is afraid of him, for all he puts on such a bold front."

Mr. Dolliver left the room hastily. The day was proving to be one of the most trying in his experience.

"It is not my world, but God's," he murmured at last, after some hours of painful thinking in his own room. "He loves and pities men far more than we can do, and I am sure that some day right will triumph."

When the dinner bell rang he went down reluctantly, for he fancied his presence was distasteful to Reginald, while there came into his heart a longing for that home where his loved and lost were waiting for him. But perhaps there was still some work for him to do before he left the world or, sadder thought, he might not himself be ready to enter that sinless world.

Alan's face wore a sadder expression than Mr. Dolliver had ever seen upon it before. Later on the good man learned that there had been a stormy interview that afternoon in the library. Reginald had come to Deeplawn prepared to take strong measures with his brother to secure his own purposes, but he found to his chagrin that he had something harder than he anticipated in bending the lad's will. As he looked in his brother's face opposite him at the table an expression of bitter hatred convulsed the once handsome features. He had staked his last dollar and was now penniless, save for the joint ownership of Deeplawn, which he could not touch without Alan's consent, and even then the estate could not be disposed of until Alan came of age; but the house could be shut, all the servants and farm hands discharged, and the place rented for a term of years while Alan was at college. The interview ended without getting the promise of a single dollar, save the money to pay a comrade who had loaned Reginald sufficient to bring him to Deeplawn. Mr. Bruce had been amazed at Alan's self-restraint under his brother's cruel taunts, accusing him of selfishness and lack of natural affection, and sneers at Christians generally and himself in particular. Alan turned on him at last, his face white with the restraint of controlled passion:

" I would give every dollar I am worth, and you know it, Rex, if it would make you an honest, temperate man. But I shall not give a cent to keep you in your present condition."

Losing all control of himself, Reginald struck out fiercely at Alan, but Mr. Bruce thrust him aside, somewhat breaking the force of the blow; but the lad's shoulder was lame for weeks.

"Will you promise never to repeat that offense?"

Reginald cowered at the blaze of wrath in his brother's eyes, but made no reply.

"Oh, Rex, what will you become, if you go on like this!" the younger brother added. His anger died out and only pity and a supreme desire to save his brother at whatever cost, filled his heart. As he stood looking at the marred face, a conversation with Mrs. Dixon some months before came vividly to his remembrance. She laid all the blame of Reginald's ruined life on the university where he had gone at eighteen years of age. "Before that," she had said, "he was as good a boy as one could wish to live with; he scarcely knew the taste of liquor, and as for cards, he cared nothing for them, but said they were only fit to pass away the time of feeble-minded men and women; but the next year when he came home I saw a great change in him, his clothes smelled scandalously of tobacco, and when I unpacked his trunk I found several packs of cards, some with gilt edges that he had when he went to parties, and others that were a sight more worn than the books that he studied out of. I didn't tell your father for he was very stern and Reginald begged me not to betray him. Before he came back the next year your father had met with the accident that so soon ended his life, and after that there was nobody I could go to. I've thought a hundred times that if I was rich I'd hesitate long before I would send a boy to college, but perhaps they are not all alike."

"Most of the young men who go to college are not ruined," Alan had returned, "and those who are would most likely fall anyway."

"I asked him once if they all did like him, and he said there were some 'muffs' who did nothing but study, and they were a dry lot."

"They are the ones that take care of our world."

"I expect so. I asked him if the teachers didn't look after them. He said, of course they did; gave them lectures ever so many times a week and examined their papers; but I concluded if they'd given them some thrashings, and examined their morals, 'twould have been better. Seems to me if women had the care of colleges they'd look after the young folks better than the perfessors, as he calls the schoolmasters. I always had a good opinion mostly of perfessors, but I've lost all conceit of that kind."

"Your loss is small compared with theirs."

"I've always advised him on no account to let you go to such wicked places, but I don't think they'd hurt you any now."

Alan had received Mrs. Dixon's compliment with a sober face. She soon interrupted the painful reverie into which he had fallen by saying: "It seems curious that they don't take warning from each other; he told me once that there were those who went to the bad every year, or if they graduated, were dependent on their rich relations. I know things might be regulated better. There was a time when prisoners and slaves and such like were looked after, but rich men's sons go to the bad without anybody noticing."

Alan assured her they were not such a neglected class as she supposed.

"Well, there's a screw loose somewhere. I'm only an ignorant woman, I never parsed a sentence of grammar in my life, but there's things we can find out without grammar. Why, I've thought as I looked over your brother's things, and made out as well as I could, his bills and 'billy duxes,' for I made it a p'int to read every scrap of writing I could make out, though I never let on to him—as I say, I've thought time and again, before I'd leave a pile of money to my children, I'd give it all away to some good object, the heathen or something of that kind."

As this conversation came vividly to his mind Alan felt a great wave of pity for the brother who once was so tender and true, but had been stolen from him by evil associates. To Reginald's consternation he went to his side, and taking the hand that had struck at him a few moments before he said: "Won't you turn over a new leaf even yet, Rex? God will help you."

The only answer was a muttered oath as he bade him keep his cant to himself. Alan turned away hopelessly, while he too muttered: "That will not be all that I shall keep."

A moment after he went to the table and wrote a few lines, handing the paper to Reginald; a gleam of fierce hatred shot from his eyes as he scanned the paper, then he turned hastily and left the room.

"I shall make my will at once, or is the will of a minor legal?"

"I am afraid not," was Mr. Bruce's reply.

"Is there no way I can dispose of my property in case of death?"

"It is doubtful if there is."

"Then law sadly needs reforming. I should like every contingency provided for." Mr. Bruce understood his meaning; the same hand that had dealt the blow might not fail in its next attempt.

"I am not versed in legal lore, but I think you might do this: make a will bequeathing what you possess to your brother, but appoint administrators, allowing him only a certain sum yearly; you could stipulate any amount you thought safe."

"I shall go into the city at once, to-morrow, for everything shall, if possible, be settled. After that I shall have one care less, but I would like to live longer." He glanced through the open window to the fields and hills he had looked at from childhood, never with such a heavy heart as at that moment.

"You might pacify your brother by giving him a generous allowance. You will even then have more than you are in the habit of spending from your yearly income."

"Money is not the question. If I had an income of millions I would not do it. What I want is to save him. This man, you see, is not my brother, but a ruin—alcohol and sin combined, with some small shred of manhood remaining, perhaps. I will keep him here, and if possible save him. You will not leave me until I have learned what you can teach, if I ever can."

Mr. Bruce knew the sacrifice was vastly greater than any pecuniary one could be that he might make for his brother; not only the pedestrian excursion they were to have taken during the holidays but after that the college course, a very wide one, of which he had already elected the studies, and which would take six or eight years to complete, must be relinquished. Many a talk had they indulged in on the subject as they trudged together on their long holiday excursions, for Alan had been a firm believer in the wisdom of the old philosophers who taught their pupils in the open air. He was determined to imitate those heroic sages who despised luxurious living, but thought nobly. The result was that at eighteen he could stand the strain of severe study or physical exertion that few at twenty-five could endure. In size and strength he was now more than a match for his brother, thanks to a pure mind in a well-trained body.

He left the house without speaking to any one, for he had an instinctive feeling that what he was anxious to do must be done quickly, if at all. Mr. Dolliver went to Alan's room that afternoon, for he felt anxious about his boy and made, as an excuse for his visit, the need of having something done for old Adam. The door was slightly ajar and as he glanced in, he was surprised to see Reginald standing by the dressing table with a small vial and glass in his hand. He heard the door move and glancing fiercely around ordered Mr. Dolliver from the room—a command the old gentleman obeyed very promptly; but he went at once in search of Mr. Bruce, for something in Reginald's manner made him feel anxious for Alan's safety. When he made his communication he was surprised at the very grave look in the tutor's face.

"I will see what he has been about as soon as I am certain he has gone to his own room. To-morrow you will probably know everything."

After dinner Mr. Dolliver was sitting in his own room, when a tap at the door disturbed the reverie into which he had fallen. He thought at once of Reginald, but opened the door to admit whomever it might be. To his relief Mr. Bruce stood before him, but with such a grave, pale face that he started back in alarm.

"Is something wrong with the lad?" he asked.

Mr. Bruce entered and, closing the door, replied: "I have found poisoned water in Alan's room; it was poured from the bottle you saw in Reginald's hand."

"Are you sure it was poison?"

"Yes, I have submitted it to a careful analysis; it is a most powerful and deadly poison. You will be willing to testify that you saw Reginald by the table with a bottle and tumbler?"

"Certainly." The old man's nerves were terribly shaken, but he kept himself under rigid control.

"We shall have evidence now to put him where he will not attempt such a crime again."

"In prison?"

"It will be useless to mention that to Alan; but, fortunately, there are asylums where such persons can be placed. A term of confinement may be the best possible discipline for him."

"I doubt if Alan will consent even to that much punishment for his wayward brother."

"Fortunately it will be beyond his power to prevent it. I am going to follow him at once to the city. I shall get a couple of the tenants to stay here for the night, as I feel certain Reginald is insane."

Mr. Bruce returned a little later with two stalwart farmers, but he had not been gone from the house very long when the watchers had enough to do at times to keep Reginald in his room. Some one suggested that it was delirium tremens, but Michael Flynn remarked that he had seen too many cases of the doldrums to be mistaken. Reginald's one desire seemed to be to make away with his brother and get possession of his property.

Mr. Dolliver shrank back appalled at times. Michael Flynn interposed: "You are too ould a man to be losin' yer slape; besides it's no place for the loiks av you to be listenin' to the oaths and curses. I'm used to 'em meself, for I was in a tavern for years afore I cum here; it seems like ould times to be a-listenin' to the remarks av the poor crayther."

"You must be very thankful for the change," was Mr. Dolliver's response; and he followed it up with some words that Michael never forgot.

After a while Mr. Dolliver left the room, when Michael became unusually thoughtful. "It was no manner av use for me to be talkin' wid the ould gintleman; the clargy, av course, can talk better nor the loikes av us, but he do be sayin' very unsettlin' things. 'Twould be a good thing if a poor sowl was sure what was the thrue faith; heretics do seem to have more luck nor us. 'Twould be too bad if they made out better for both worlds."

"Maybe we'd better stick to our own faith, we can't be sure, anyway," his mate said, slowly. He was an easy-going creature not given to perplexing speculations about anything.

Reginald was growing restless again, and soon all theological problems were driven from their thoughts by the question how they were to control the man whom they were set to watch.

When Alan and Mr. Bruce reached home the next day, steps were immediately taken to place Reginald under the care of medical experts. Alan would feel less anxiety about his brother while confined in an asylum than he had done for many a month before. He cherished the hope that reason might be restored after the system had undergone such a change that the craving for liquor might possibly be removed.

CHAPTER VI

NEWFOUNDLAND

IN planning their pedestrian tour Alan was eager to go out of the beaten tracks and to get in touch with elementary things. For a while every place suggested by Mr. Bruce presented some drawback, the greatest in every case being the probability of meeting the tourists who were going over the same ground.

After some weeks Newfoundland was suggested, with a possible trip to Labrador in case the former should not be solitary enough. Alan was delighted with the proposition, stipulating for an Indian who could guide them through those inland solitudes, where they could enjoy as aboriginal a style of living as is possible in this age of steam and electricity. He was quite indifferent about the commissariat department, permitting Mr. Bruce to order whatever supplies he himself desired, for he expected to furnish himself, by gun and rod, with all the fish, flesh, and fowl that he desired, without any dependence upon the doubtful contents of the tin cans. He took very few books, for he remembered that the old Chaldean and Greek poets were not cumbered with their scrolls when they journeyed through primitive forests with no other guide-marks than the stars.

The travelers reached St. John's early in July. The trip itself had been positive rapture to Alan, as it was, in the first place, such a relief to get away from the haunting memories of Deeplawn, and too, it was his initial experience of the ocean.

In a while he was strongly tempted to give up his college course and make his home on the sea, for workers were needed there as much as in university chairs.

After making all necessary purchases at St. John's andsecuring the services of a trusty guide, they jubilantly started on a sailing packet for the north. Alan certainly found matters primitive enough when he swung in his hammock in the cabin, or sat at a table innocent alike of paint or linen, and ate his dinner off the cheapest earthenware and drank a wretchedly poor quality of tea from a yellow bowl. The codfish and halibut, however, were fresh, the pork scraps were sweet, the potatoes that came to the table in their jackets were white and mealy, and the sea biscuits comparatively fresh; besides he was not tempted to eat after his hunger had been appeased, which was a gain over a higher civilization.

The wind was fair and they bounded along cheerily. The sailors, who were also fishermen, were very anxious to make the voyage agreeable to the travelers. The slight difference between officers and men existed only in name, for no one of them could either read or write. Mr. Bruce frequently assured them he would be much better pleased either to have them keep in sight of land, or submit the navigation of the ship to him—a proposition which the skipper, notwithstanding his desire to please the gentlemen, received very dubiously.

They reached Bonavista, however, in safety, and there took leave of the crew, and the following day, with Gabe, their Indian guide, started inland with their canoes and stores. Gabe was not very certain about his name. He knew that it had been suggested by the priest at his christening, but, unfortunately, his mother had forgotten the rest, if there had been any more. He was, however, very certain that he had been named for some one in the heavenly places, and he was perfectly content with the cognomen, believing that if it were good enough for use there, it must be also for him. The man proved an interesting problem to Alan. He was quick in motion, sharp in vision and was, like his race, laconic; not because his vocabulary was limited, but that he disliked to talk; but what he may have lacked in speech he more than made up in more valuable qualities, closeness of observation, a capacity to marshal all his forces at a second's notice, nerves of steel, and a courage that never wavered under most exciting or dangerous circumstances. Alan at once began to study this son of the forest, wondering if he did not resemble those men of the older world who, like him, were untrained in the schools, but whose faculties were developed in other ways. Like them, he studied the heavens, read the signs of a coming storm long before the two representatives of a higher civilization could see any trace of nature mustering her forces to work them inconvenience, while it was impossible to puzzle him as to their whereabouts, as long as the sun or stars were visible. He appeared to be well acquainted with the habits of every feathered inhabitant of the forest, and his knowledge of other woodland life was equally extensive.

One day, as Alan sat with Mr. Bruce by an inland stream fighting black flies and pulling up from the brown depths splendid trout, he said:

"Gabe is just as profound a student as any of us."

"How do you make that out?"

"We have studied from books and have assimilated, for the most part, other men's thoughts, while he has gone direct to nature and there studied God's thoughts, which have given him a freshness that most of us lack. He is a real man; there is the stuff in him out of which a score of dudes could be transformed into average men, with all the manliness they could stand and still retain their 'butterfly' proclivities."

"You are hard on the poor fellows."

"I have cause to be. If Rex had been with Gabe six months of the year out in these wholesome solitudes, he would not be where he is now." It was the first time Alan had spoken of his brother since the day they had carried him from Deeplawn, and the bitterness with which he spoke proved that the wound had not yet healed.

"There seems to be a law of compensation running through life. Those on the lowest rounds of the social ladder, like Gabe, who scarcely realize that they are made out of the same material as their rulers, have joys, and very keen ones too, that their superiors know nothing about."

"Gabe certainly has," Alan asserted with decision. "I have seen his nostrils dilate and his eyes flash with a very superior kind of complacency as he steered us skillfully through the rapids, or brought down a bird as it sailed heedlessly through the blue—a feat of skill, by the way, which few of our prize marksmen could perform, and showing the steady nerve and perfect vision of the man."

"That is mere physical prowess," Mr. Bruce remarked.

"It only goes to prove, however, that he has the ability our university crews hold as high, I fancy, as they do intellectual power. Besides, Gabe has other skill than that of mere nerve and vision."

"You do not meditate reverting to an aboriginal state, I hope."

"Not quite," was the reply. "But it is superb, this getting away from men and towns. I did not think I could ever be so light-hearted again; and even now I get almost ashamed of myself that I seem to forget where Rex is and what he is. But the world does seem so free and pure out here that it makes me forget the wrecks. If I could only get Rex out here with Gabe.

"I have talked with him about it and he says he would not be afraid to spend a summer with him in the woods. He says too, that there is nothing like the smell of the earth where men's feet have never trod to bring one back to health of body as well as mind."

"You must remember that Gabe is still very much of a savage, with all the fascination of untrodden places strong upon him. We may apostrophize this sort of life and nature's untrained energy, and it is all very well to come back to such primitive ways for a few weeks out of the year, but civilization is incomparably superior."

"What has civilization done for Rex?"

"We must not judge the whole by a few

extreme cases. There are drunken Indians as degraded as the worst specimens of civilization."

"Would there have been had they not first come in contact with us? Give these primitive races our religion and everything that elevates us, keeping from them our vices—what then?"

"Do the same for our white races and I believe you would develop a finer type. It is no use, however, for there can in this world be only individual excellence; the tares and wheat must grow together till the final harvest, and each is at liberty to elect which he will be. I do not doubt, however, that this fact will greatly increase the reward of those who receive their Maker's approval at the final adjustment of rewards."

"The true Christian does not work for reward, here or hereafter," Alan said softly.

"There are not many, I fear, of that variety; but it strikes me that you have the making of such a one. Though I am your teacher, I must confess to you that you have caused me more conscience pricks than the parsons ever did. I can listen calmly to preaching—we are used to that; but you have lived, and I have watched you closely. Possibly I may forget all these impressions when we are separated, or I may become one of your sort. I am just now much like a chip on the tide, carried whichever way the current wills."

"You can never be that; fate is an exploded theory and we are all free agents; but it will make a great difference to you which way you steer."

It was not easy for Alan to talk on such subjects to his teacher, and a word dropped now and then may have been all the more effective on that account. They sat on the bank silently drawing in the rainbow-tinted trout, until at last Alan exclaimed:

"It is positive murder for us to fish longer. We have more here now than we can possibly eat, unless we confine ourselves exclusively to a trout diet." He reeled his line as he spoke and sat watching Mr. Bruce, who was prolonging the bliss of angling by playing with the trout on his hook.

"If this were not such an out-of-the-way place, we could supply our friends all over the Union with trout and game," Mr. Bruce muttered, as he took the trout at last from the hook and followed Alan's example.

"If we could bring an entire charity school here from the slums of one of our great cities, we could fish to our heart's content. Do you think we could manage it?" Alan asked his question eagerly.

"It would involve a great deal of care, together with considerable expense," was the tutor's reply.

"It would pay us though. Just fancy those hungry little wretches let loose under these trees for a couple of months! The game laws, I believe, do not reach inland so far as this, and they could have all the fowl and fish they wanted."

"Boys would soon tire of such diet."

"Certainly; we should have other things of course, canned food and biscuits, if nothing else. But what a revelation it would be to them! They might grow to love nature so well they would elect a life in the country when they became men. Anything that helps coming generations to find homes in the country, is money very well applied. I don't care particularly how I spend my money, so that I help others; the poor need it as much as the university students I planned to help when I was a mere boy."

"That is not the orthodox way for reformers. They must choose their work and then stick to it."

"I am not committed to anything, except that I must do my own work now and Rex's as well."

"Is that possible? I fancy we must each do our own work or have it go forever undone. How is it, Alan, that you give me such uncomfortable views about these matters and rob me of the charm of idleness that I could otherwise so fully enjoy?"

"It may be sensations are infectious. I know I am puzzled about these matters a good deal," Alan answered, reflectively.

Just then Gabe gave the signal that supper was ready and the conversation was interrupted. He was an expert cook and the outdoor life gave fine appetites, so that they always obeyed his summons with alacrity. He had, in addition to his culinary gifts, another accomplishment that often stood them in good stead as they sat watching the twilight deepen among the trees—an ancient pipe through whose black stem he had drawn many an hour's solacement. The troublesome black insects, the chief drawback to forest life, had not yet acquired a taste for tobacco, and so circled warily on the extreme outer edge of the blue wreaths. Alan, as he frequently supplemented Gabe's efforts by waving a green bough over his head, used to wonder, if his perceptions were keen enough, would he not hear a jangled mixture of coughing, spluttering, and insect remonstrances from those multitudinous pests because of that malodorous pipe.

They always retired early, after freely distributing a compound in their tents that Gabe manufactured from various ingredients, which exorcised the stinging things more effectually than the tobacco. They enjoyed most perfect sleep, not even disturbed by the flaring fires which Gabe arose at regular intervals to tend in order to keep wild animals at bay. They used to rise in the early morning from their bed of boughs feeling that they had received new strength from the contact with mother earth, while all the forest around them was thrilling with the melody poured from a thousand throats.

It is true there were stormy days—the long, pitiless rains of midsummer; these were an infliction, for trouting in mackintoshes, or gunning under similar difficulties, was not to be thought of when one must tramp under rain-soaked trees or through a tangle of fern and underbrush. Alan had lost much of his relish for books under these primitive conditions, and so he used to drift away to Gabe's tiny wigwam, and prevail upon him to recount his exploits on sea and land.

Gabe was ever obliging, and since it was stories of adventure which this keen-eyed young fellow craved, adventures he gave him of the most thrilling description, for Gabe was a novelist in his own way, and could paint as lurid pictures as the most sensational of the craft. What he liked best was to see the dreamy look creep into those brave eyes that bore the expression in their depths of one who had looked on sorrow. He soon discovered that his listener seemed most interested in the traditions of older days, when the Indians owned all this vast western world away to the setting sun. Alan felt certain that Gabe drew largely on his imagination for these stories and traditions, and since he was not certain where fact ended and fiction began, he cheated the narrator by studying him and speculating very often during his most exciting recitals what Gabe might have been had his skin been white, and his early days spent amid the higher civilization of the pale faces.

One evening, as they talked, Gabe suggested a trip to Labrador, asserting that there were vessels frequently passing to and fro, and on their return to Bonavista, if nothing better presented itself, they could go to St. John's and there take the mail steamer for the north. He offered his services as guide at so low a rate that Alan secured him on the spot, and then went immediately to Mr. Bruce and announced his determination to start the following day.

"We have done about all there is to do here," he explained. "I really think I would like something more exciting. Gabe described the scenery there in such glowing colors that I want to see it all for myself. According to him nature must have been in a particularly merry mood during some of her upheavals in those wild solitudes."

Mr. Bruce signified his willingness to accompany Alan as far from civilization as he might desire, and at day-dawn their tents were struck, their canoe started, and their faces turned toward the sea. What a perfect day it was—floating now out of some dark ravine through overhanging cliffs, then out on broad lake-like stretches of unrippled water, the only sound to break the languorous stillness being the swish of the paddles, or a bird-call from the forest depths.

Alan took a turn paddling now and then, and again, with both hands clasped for a pillow, he leaned back, looking into the depths that can only be scaled by fancy's strong wing; great suns were wheeling there, no doubt as full of activities as this planet ship that held him prisoner; he wondered had sin disturbed their harmony; were insanity and death the lot of the beings who swung aloft in those vast circles of worlds? His fancy perhaps was never quite so busy as on those days when he floated hour after hour through those inland solitudes.

Mr. Brúce too, seemed in a contemplative mood. He had a copy of "Dante," as the poet wrote it out of his own heart, in the language of his sunny Tuscan home; but there were long pauses between the lines as his eyes followed now a bird, wheeling far above him joyously, and now the sun-kissed waters on the leafy shore.

"Just to think of the souls up there," Alan remarked at last. "What an army our world has sent to join those ranks of shining ones! It will be grand to die, for Sirius, Aldebaran, Orion, Jupiter, all may have their contingents there too. I wonder how theirs and ours will rank together, and in what ways their experiences will agree?"

Mr. Bruce looked at him curiously. What sort of youth was this who lived so intensely in both worlds? Other young fellows at his age had their ambitions mainly bounded by the fit of their garments, the silky down appearing on lips and cheeks, their skill in athletic games, or the way their tender overtures were received by maidens as feather-headed as themselves. Alan had a most provoking indifference to all these matters, save the athletic sports. No captain of a university eleven could be prouder of the fact that his nerve was strong enough to match the muscle of the champion wrestler in rustic circles at Deeplawn.

They reached Bonavista at sunset. Gabe safely moored his canoe and then went around in search of a vessel. In a short time he came speeding back with the news that a vessel was just about ready to sail for Labrador. They went on board, and the anchor was lifted that evening. The moon was near the full, but the air too calm to suit the skipper, who was leaving behind him the bride of a week. To be becalmed in those rippling northern waters, no matter how superb the scenery might be, would not suit him so well as a rattling wind.

Mr. Bruce and Alan, grown accustomed to roughing it, lay down on some folds of sailcloth on the deck, after fixing a bit of awning above their heads to shut out the moonbeams. Here they slept as profoundly as if resting on down and curtained with satin, and they certainly awoke with a much better taste in their mouths. They were ready for their breakfast of fresh cod, salt pork, and biscuits, which Alan ate with a relish that astonished the sailors, who did not think that a youth rich enough to travel with his tutor and a guide, would have an appetite in common with toughened toilers of the sea. He learned rapidly, and profiting by the lessons on the way up from St. John's, he was soon able to do a sailor's work. The weather had been so calm that he had leisure to master all the intricacies of ropes and sea phrases, for the sailors were glad to communicate what they knew to the youth who, by his kindliness, had won their hearty good-will. They were becalmed at one time for several days, but Alan did not find the delay long. He reckoned that when the winds did waken and fill out those flapping sails, he himself could manage the craft safely, were but the opportunity given him.

At last, one night, he and Mr. Bruce were awakened by a heavy rumbling, and a moment later the water drenched them where they lay. Springing to their feet, they found the staunch little ship in the midst of a half-gale, and plowing along finely toward the north, with every inch of canvas set, and the captain whistling cheerily at the wheel. Mr. Bruce went below, while Alan scrambled into an oiled suit, loaned him by a sailor whose watch he offered to relieve, and then began, to the rhythm of rolling thunder and dashing rain, to put his new acquirements in practice. He found it was not so easy climbing into the rigging and making his way along the slippery deck as when the vessel was motionless, but this was vastly more to his mind, for it was life, and he felt his pulses tingling with the mad delight of overcoming the elemental fury. In the height of the storm Mr. Bruce came on deck to urge him to seek the cabin's shelter, but his pleading was in vain.

"I promised a sailor to keep his watch, and I won't go back on my word," Alan declared, dashing the spray from his face as he spoke. "I am going to earn my breakfast and an appetite to relish it."

"You are not a sailor, and the steward assures me that this is a night to try the seamanship of an old tar. It will be a dear night's work for a good many I fear, if you are washed overboard."

"I will take care. It is too much to ask me to be shut up in a hole on a night like this."

Mr. Bruce was not convinced, but made his way carefully to the wheel and interviewed the captain.

"The young master 'll be all right; you can let him stay," was the reply, given with all confidence. Far from convinced, Mr. Bruce stood in the driving storm, resolved to watch Alan's movements if he could not control them.

"Pity that un couldn't be a sailor, he do well at it and would soon be a skipper," the captain remarked, as he tightened his jacket and followed Alan's movements admiringly. "No girl about he, and he takes to we just like one of our own lads."

"I wish he was not so eager about sailors' duties just now, for his life is most valuable, and the sea would swallow him as greedily as the most useless."

"Yes, I've seen he take down a whole vessel load in a storm; but us don't go till our time comes. Every sailor knows that, and it keeps they from being frightened."

Alan came at last to Mr. Bruce's side.

"If you are so anxious about me, I will go below," he said, softly.

"Of your own free will?" Mr. Bruce asked, greatly relieved.

"You must ask no questions but take my submission for what it is worth," was the laughing reply. "And you must come and call Solomon yourself and tell him it is not my fault."

The storm followed them until they reached Labrador. Alan's face had been finely bronzed and his hands roughened by the toils of the sea.

They soon realized that Gabe had not overdrawn the description of nature's rugged wildness in that northern land, as with the canoe they made long excursions inland, returning to the vessel with faces covered with the bites of the myriad insects, chief among them mosquitoes and black flies, but as delighted with what they had seen as if a few fly bites more or less were matters of supreme inconsequence. The bark tarried but a short time, and Gabe then suggested a trip around the western shore of Newfoundland in some sailing vessel, for, evidently, he was unwilling to part company with these new acquaintances. He assured them they could easily take a schooner from the south across to Cape Breton, which lay only sixty miles away, and after that they would have no further difficulty in making their way homeward. He furthermore assured Alan that he would be able by that time to take full charge of a schooner himself.

"If he had a capable crew," Mr. Bruce gently insinuated. But Gabe maintained that he could get on with the same crews with which average skippers are provided. The suggestion suited Alan's fancy, but they had already overstayed their vacation period, and their presence was demanded at Deeplawn.

The remains of the commissariat department were bestowed upon Gabe, in addition to a more substantial token of their appreciation of his services, and then good-bye was said.

The travelers, however, first promised to return the following year if all was well, and with him for a guide, take the proposed trip along the west coast.

CHAPTER VII

UNIVERSITY LIFE

DEEPLAWN was closed for the winter, save only a few rooms reserved for Mrs. Dixon, Mr. Dolliver, and one of the maids. Alan went to Brown; Mr. Bruce had secured a professorship in a western college; and Reginald was still in the asylum. In some ways he now seemed rational, but the consuming desire to destroy Alan's life had in no wise abated. Indeed, so determined was he that he was not acquainted with Alan's whereabouts lest, escaping, he might put in execution the plans that occupied most of his thoughts. Not one of the experts who had treated him held out any hopes of his recovery, for his mind appeared to be hopelessly diseased. For the last few years he had lived at such high pressure, violating recklessly every physical law, that his constitution had sunk beneath the strain. Alan had visited him once, but the ferocious gleam in the once kindly, beaming eyes, the sardonic convulsion of the features, the scarce human growl of rage issuing from the frothing lips at his presence, told only too plainly that the fewer interviews between them the better for both. Alan gradually learned from others of the temptations that had beset his brother, but which he had neither the wisdom nor will-power to withstand. The wine suppers and mad revelries connected with them, the gambling and other nameless vices, had laid a poor foundation for mature manhood when all governing restraint was removed.

Alan had elected a full course of general study; he had no special leaning toward any of the professions, and he was not willing to join either the overcrowded legal or medical ranks, nor did he fear that the country was in danger of the present supply proving inadequate to the demand.

It was soon generally known among his acquaintances that, if he chose, he might join the ranks of the gilded youth, since his family was sufficiently prominent for him to take this position, both by birth and fortune; hence any section of club life was open to him, and he was enabled to draw his companions from any set he desired. It was known too, that he had control of a large income already, and would therefore be a very useful addition to any of their societies, for the many luxuries in which they indulged were expensive, and additional members were warmly welcomed; so a good many were bidding for his friendship.

He received their overtures with his usual politeness, and expressed his willingness to enter into any society that would tend to further his literary advancement. But there was something in his manner that marked him as superior to the ordinary society proclivities, and impressed the students that he, in some measure, lived on a higher plane than they.

However, Alan was not easily persuaded to become a member of any organization whose claims had been presented to him, and he worked at his studies determinedly, with the consciousness that he was mentally expanding and his powers of observation growing stronger and more varied.

As the months wore on, however, the question presented itself to his mind whether a club formed on helpful principles might not be beneficial to students, since it seemed to be a necessity with them to require something of the kind. He was not constituted like the unhappy class of reformers who take their work so seriously that their whole life is embittered by it. The idea assumed more definite proportions, and with his accustomed directness he invited his acquaintances to join him in his projected enterprise, explaining to them just what his thought was, and proposing a few simple rules for their acceptance and signature, which impressed some of them as remarkably similar to the ten commandments; the ordinary vices were so definitely prohibited that there was no possibility of a misunderstanding.

Of course, there was a good deal of fun made of the proposed club. There were a good many toasts drunk in its honor, and some very witty speeches had their inspiration from it. But there was little to be gained in this way, for Alan, to all appearances, was equally indifferent to their commendations or contempt. Half a dozen names had been subscribed the first evening, most of them being students in theology, and the quiet entertainment that followed hardly seemed different from any ordinary gathering in a comrade's room.

Before the evening was ended, however, they began to fancy this new club might mean vastly more than they anticipated, for later, when Alan more fully explained what the rules they had signed really included, they realized their promises to be deeply binding upon them. Not merely the few years of student life were concerned, but they were for every year until, from other worlds, perhaps, they would look back upon this life as a task finished for good or ill.

They found that their promises included the diligent use of every opportunity to improve themselves, and help others to do the same; to overcome any constitutional weakness of pride, sloth, selfishness in the abstract, or in the coarser forms that develop by indulgence therein; to defend the helpless, whether human or dumb; to expend as little as possible on themselves by needless self-indulgence; and to endeavor to bring to mankind the age of light, dreamed of and sung by philosophers and poets through every period. Of course, in addition, it was in the strictest sense a temperance society.

After the rules had been read and explained with considerable minuteness, all were given the privilege, if they so desired, to have their names taken off the pledge. The very coolness of the leader, Alan, as he proposed this, fascinated them. He assured them that he was not anxious to have timid members without the courage to endure the contempt of fellow-students, since such would, in all probability, fall to their lot. "I must say that I would prefer two men of real courage, who would be just as strong to bear contempt as praise, rather than a score of weak-hearted ones. They would be more help to any cause." He spoke in a way that made every one of them present wish to be one of the two possessed of genuine courage. No one requested a withdrawal of his signature, and the six names remained on the paper.

As they walked away when the meeting was ended, each one confessed to the feeling that he had come in contact with one who was different from themselves, and, in fact, from any they knew. They were also not a little surprised that one younger than most of them, and with less experience of school life, should have compelled such ready submission to his will.

"It is my opinion that young Rivers will make his mark in the world," one of the students named Stennett, remarked defensively. He was the oldest of the six, and felt that some excuse was necessary for the easy ascendency gained over each one of them.

"I scarcely think so," another responded; "he is too religious ever to get far ahead. That always bars one's progress. But I can't understand how he got us all under his thumb so easily. He must have a good deal of reserve power. However, I mean to stick to the programme, if for nothing else than to see what will come of it."

"He is not the one to be kept down by religion or anything of the kind. He is a genuine worker, and very bright I am told, and gets through as much study as two ordinary students."

"He is a born leader, whatever else he may be," Stennett declared. He was feeling more serious that night than he had done for many a month; his father was a minister in a country village, and at great self-sacrifice was putting his son through college. He realized that he had not been so industrious as he might have been, but could have considerably lessened his father's burdens if he had so willed, by hard study, and securing some of the generous money prizes provided in the university by benevolently disposed persons. Now as he saw a meteor flash from the upper abyss, his thoughts were suddenly arrested and diverted from every-day channels to a time farther along the future, when not even a reminiscence of him would remain on earth. To him, in that future period of his existence, it would be a matter of tremendously serious importance how he used his privileges and opportunities of this present. He left his comrades and went to his own room. Far into the night he lay tossing on his bed because of the troubled thoughts begotten of that evening's encounter. Alan was none the wiser for some time of what he had been the means of doing for his fellow-student. But weeks after, as they were strolling together in the afterglow of sunset one frosty winter evening, Stennett confessed the change wrought in him, and thanked the friend who had helped him in the very best way one human being can benefit another.

The new club was much discussed among those who knew of its existence, and others applied for admission, thereby repeating history and recalling another club that met in a university over the sea some eight score years ago, and which has very considerably revolutionized the face of Christendom. A few cast ridicule on it to Alan's face—a feat they did not care a second time to repeat. With cutting sarcasm he bade them confine their criticisms to their own gatherings, and endeavor to profit by their own teaching.

One bully, who measured the youth's prowess by his age and beardless face, was so worsted in the argument that he undertook to supplement his attack with his fists. The muscle of his opponent was a matter of most aggravating surprise to him, since he found that his arguments by sleight of hand fully equalled those of speech. Alan probably rose in the estimation of the students by this sturdy defense of his rights more than he might have done by a long course of moral suasion; but after he had recovered from the passionate impulse that forced him so far to forget himself, he resolved never to repeat the act, no matter what the provocation might be. To insure this he wisely determined not to engage in wordy warfare, which is only a little more respectable than the pugilistic kind.

At the next meeting the members were filled with astonishment to hear him apologize for the part he had taken. He went on to say: "I felt that I had descended to a level with the Sweenys and Sullivans, or lower still, with the dumb brutes who adjust their difficulties with tooth and claw. I promise never again to disgrace myself or the members of our club by such brutality." He resumed his seat quietly, but Ralph Stennett was on his feet in an instant.

"It's awfully plucky of you to make that confession, Rivers; we did not expect it. To tell the truth, we were very proud of a leader who could knock the wind so easily out of Clancy; but the way you have put it shows fighting in another light which I, for one, never viewed it in before."

There was hearty cheering after Stennett's speech, but whether it was for him or Alan, none of them seemed rightly to know. Alan did not permit any further waste of time, but proceeded to the business of the evening. Questions were to be discussed that had to do with other than student life. It was not merely necessary to know what the ancients thought and wrote, with the great army of book and creed-makers through the centuries of our written history, but what work they were individually fitted for and likely to succeed in. He stated, with transparent frankness, his own perplexity in the matter of choosing a career, at the same time relating that bit of his experience which had revolutionized his thought when the desert prophet looked at him from out the pages of the old illuminated Bible.

A curious sensation went through the group of students as they listened to him telling in that matter-of-fact way, what each one of them would have hesitated to acknowledge, had it been their own experience; while their admiration of, and reverence for him, as he spoke, would have surprised him could he have looked into their hearts. He impressed them as so thoroughly honest, and withal possessed of such rare nobility of character, that their natures were touched as they could have been by no other, save a comrade of their own age.

There was a good deal of suppressed enthusiasm, manifested only in the glistening eyes and working of the mobile faces. Subjects were discussed in the same business-like manner as their games or lectures, which few of them had ever heard spoken of outside the walls of a church. They soon found that Alan was far ahead of any of them in his knowledge of classic literature, while in the spirit of its interpretation he left them also far behind. The Bible was referred to as naturally, and also as fearlessly, as Thucydides or Plato, and the splendor of its rhetoric discussed as critically, but with a reverence not shown toward any other literature. To their great surprise they found themselves growing interested as the discussion proceeded, and consented to devote to it the same attention bestowed on other masterpieces. Alan confessed that he had given serious thought to the possibility of having the Bible introduced as a text-book in the various colleges. On one occasion he said:

"We are a long way behind the ancients in this respect, and it is becoming noticeable in our national character. Even the worship of Jupiter or Saturn, I believe, was better than the wholesale irreverence of the present day, the atheism, for it is practically that, which controls men and women who are not Christians."

This question had been freely discussed, and even the most skeptical was forced to acknowledge that there was some force in his statement. Alan had some original ideas respecting the length of their session and the hour of meeting. He preferred natural to artificial light for everything but sleep, and if possible began his day's work with the sun. He declared that he did not find any special inspiration in gaslight, while his eyes were all the better for the natural light. When the subject was discussed he reasoned that it was only the more ferocious animals, as a rule, that chose the night time for seeking their livelihood, while all the nobler specimens of brute life carry on their conscious existence during the day. He very ardently desired to have their hour for meeting changed to the afternoon, but as this was contrary to all precedent, he found it impossible to persuade the other members. As the months wore away, new names were constantly added to the list, and the interest increased, for the subjects discussed were both numerous and varied. They continued to give the Bible the first place always, for Alan insisted that men nowadays should respect matters connected with the future life as much as the heathen who, as a rule, regarded the question of immortality and existence of the immortal gods as the very highest within the range of their intellectual faculties. There was never anything apologetic in his attitude toward religion, as if it was at all unusual for young men to give themselves to the diligent study of theology without being in any professional sense theologians. In the matter of Christian experience he did not insist on any rigid rules; he believed in making the way of life so simple that the least spiritual could not fail to understand it. He tried to make them look upon conversion and Christian service as the mere submitting of the will to God, and squaring their every-day life by the two commandments Christ so strongly emphasized toward the close of his ministry.

The great secret of his power over his comrades was his perfect unconsciousness of self. He went on his way with such charming indifference to everything but what he regarded the duty of the present hour. If he had indulged, as might have been so natural under the circumstances, in any exhibition of a sense of leadership, no doubt some of them would have resented it, but the most sensitive on this point could find nothing to censure. They did not know with what earnestness he tried to cultivate self-effacement.

CHAPTER VIII

AT SEA

AMONG his other eccentricities, Alan paid little attention to society, in so far as it necessitated attendance upon dinner or tea parties, or any of the gatherings where gentlemen must figure in the regulation dress coat and expansive linen. He made a very indifferent carpet knight, and always seemed somewhat ill at ease with elegantly dressed women, unless they could talk intelligently on topics above the ordinary society nothings, and did not exact from him a courtesy that struck him as almost servile. For woman in the abstract he had much of that half-forgotten chivalry which brightens the otherwise dusky pages of mediæval history; but for women in all the bravery of gowns scant at the shoulders and trailing on the floor he still possessed the contempt of the average schoolboy. His wealth and social position secured him admittance into the best society, and as time wore on his own individual merit as a brillant student would have done so; but after a few experiences he turned his face resolutely from such frivolities.

"I will never be a society man; nature did not intend me for it any more than she meant me for a musician or a tailor," he remarked at a club gathering one day when that subject was being discussed.

"You surely believe in friendly intercourse among human beings, for man is pre-eminently a social animal," one of the members returned defensively.

"Yes, certainly, I believe in friendly human fellowship as much as any of you; but too much of a certain kind is worse for a person who values time, than solitary confinement. I, for one, would stipulate that our intimate friends, to be helpful to us, must be of the finest quality, and then taken only in limited quantities."

"You are too much of a stoic for me; perhaps you really are one of those old Spartans transplanted into this nineteenth century," was the somewhat petulant reply.

"Tell me what do you gain for the loss of a good five-hours' sleep, save a fit of indigestion brought on by over-indulgence in those tempting viands of the cook's skill? I tried it two or three times from a sense of duty to old family connections; but as I came home after midnight, the very stars seemed to be questioning why I wasted my strength in that fashion. My head was in a whirl from watching the dancers, my blood hot from the heavy, perfumed air, and I hadn't a single thing to produce as a memento of what I had lost. My time is too precious and the necessity for a cool, rested brain too great for me to take time for such work.''

"I am almost tempted to believe that there are individual cases of transmigration of souls, and Confucius or Socrates perchance is taking a stroll around the earth under the guise of your stern, handsome face.''

"Bah!" was the contemptuous reply, and they forthwith began to decipher an ancient cuneiform inscription inscribed centuries ago—a task which, of course, baffled them completely; but it gave them something to think about other than the convolutions of the dance, class-suppers, and the transmigration of souls.

Alan's chivalry was not the kind to make him particularly desired by richly dressed damsels, since he had an impression, possibly an erroneous one, that they were as capable of attending to their own interests as he was to his; but a fellow-student was sure of receiving a scathing rebuke if he saw him retain his seat in a street-car, or any public gathering, when there were elderly or shabbily dressed women near at hand who had no seat. Alan himself gave his seat to the haughtiest or humblest alike, but he criticised the others only for not deferring to the latter. His student friends used to watch, with covert amusement, his fingers twitching nervously when he saw a poorly dressed woman wearily holding on to the car strap, perhaps thereby revealing her shabbiness of dress, while some sleek youth leaned back in his seat; they were pretty certain that those same sinewy fingers were aching to fling him to one side, and place the tired worker in his place.

"It is useless for you to fret and worry over the shortcomings of others. Humanity is only noble in small sections, and the rank and file have so many meannesses, both inherited and acquired, that they are enough to blight a whole race if evenly distributed," Ralph Stennett remarked wearily one day, after Alan had been talking to a few of them on the subject. Ralph was not strong-souled enough to fight all these meannesses and still keep his own heart brave and cheery. Few are thus able, and they are the reformers of the first water, the kohinoors, so to speak, among the paste.

"I do not mean to fret, but to fight," was the sturdy response. "And those who call me friend must do the same; not merely in one thing, but in everything, as far as their light goes."

"You make your terms of friendship tremendously high."

Alan glanced around keenly on the faces, more or less amused.

"Your own true manhood tells all of you that I am right; and you all likewise know that I do not ask from you more than I try to do myself—more than is due to your own natures, if you would be genuine men. I do not want any one to join us who is not anxious to make the very best of himself; I despise the half-and-half sort as much as the utterly ignoble."

"I am of the opinion that you will find it hard to entice any of us to back out of this, no matter what your terms are; you have a knack of stiffening one's moral backbone, that is—well, to say the least, uncanny," Will Hamilton said, soberly.

"If you get your moral stiffening only through me, I fear that it won't amount to much."

"You are mistaken there, I am certain. Why, my own mother would not recognize me as her boy if she could look me through and through to the very bottom of my soul—but it may not all be due to you."

This was from one of the most silent members. The look Alan bestowed upon him meant more than speech just then. The eyes, perhaps, always tell the truth, while the lips sometimes say more and often less, since our deepest thoughts ever remain unuttered.

Before the close of the year quite a few students solicited admission, although they must needs sever their connection with another society in order to subscribe to the rules which the new society so religiously adhered to.

Some of the professors, when accounts of this new club reached them, indulged in mild sarcasm; others approvingly admired the youth who dared to be singular, and whose very fearlessness won for him a recognition that few others could boast. The professors who had perpetrated their witticisms respecting the club, did not repeat the offense, for with Alan his teachers as well as his laundress were human beings, and it was only their individual worth, and not their position, which commanded his respect, and by degrees his professors learned this fact and when dealing with him presumed little upon their positions.

Nature generally accommodates herself to the exigencies of circumstance, and as there is no especial demand for heroes at the present day the market is not glutted. Hence, when a moral hero, conscientious and entirely fearless, does step down among his fellows, they usually persecute him or place him on a pedestal, be he peer or peasant, and the Brown students were not an exception to the general rule. Alan, for the most part, preferred the former treatment since it accorded better with his estimate of his own worth.

Commencement exercises over, Alan went back to Deeplawn. The place seemed lonely and Mr.

Dolliver was evidently nearing his long home, for his excursions now seldom extended farther than old Adam's cottage, while a social meeting in the kitchen at Deeplawn constituted his public exercises. Mrs. Dixon had yielded so far to his entreaties for a place to hold the meetings as to open the kitchen, and Alan very speedily transferred it to one of the spacious unused rooms. Here the people of the neighborhood would assemble and heaven seemed to them nearer because of the beautiful room in which they met. It was a joy to the aged minister to recline in an invalid-chair and give the direction of the meeting to Alan and to hear that voice explain God's word to the eager listeners.

Alan was very busy the first week or two, and then he went to Providence to put in execution a project already successfully under way. During the year, he had spoken from time to time with so much enthusiasm of his Newfoundland experiences, that each member of the club would gladly have joined him in a second expedition. Some of them, however, had their own way to make in the world, and the necessity to earn money during the vacation forced them in another direction, but there were some of them who engaged to be ready early in July.

Alan had persuaded them each to be willing to take a protégé, selected from the unsavory quarter of Providence. He had been employed in the slums during the past year, and he had done much good work. Now he saw the way open to set others working, but, to his regret, not very willingly on the part of some, and he felt certain that if the students themselves should fail to get any moral benefit out of the partnership, the ill-conditioned lads would certainly be helped.

He had thought the matter out very carefully, and had reached the determination that no matter who joined the expedition, a certain number of those poor boys should have one summer to look back upon with satisfaction. If he could get rich young men to share the burden, so much the better in every way, for he could find use for every spare dollar of his income in the quarter where he worked. He did not expect the lads to be of any use in the capacity of servants, only so far as they might furnish object lessons in broadening the sympathies of their respective patrons and teaching them the common brotherhood of man, with the privilege all may have of serving others.

Alan secured the boys and attended to their outfits and other matters connected with the journey. When they finally assembled on the train for Boston, where some of the young men were to join them and the entire party would take the boat for St. John's, they were puzzled to know which to admire most, themselves individually, or each other, so great had been the transformation wrought by the barber and tailor.

Alan disliked extremely causing unnecessary pain in hearts that had known so little of anything else, and he fancied that if the young men were permitted to choose their own body-guard the last ones chosen might have their feelings hurt and so he decided upon the device used by the eleven disciples, and when they were well under way and were steaming out toward the open sea, he collected the entire party on deck and proceeded to get matters satisfactorily arranged. Each boy's name was written on a slip of paper and put in a hat; then the young men each drew out a slip in turn. The boys watched the proceedings much more anxiously than the others would have guessed. From a very early period, indeed as far back as their memory carried them, they had been forced to look after themselves, for the most part, and as they had never had the privilege, to any great extent, of studying nature outside the city parks, they had confined themselves largely to what was most familiar in their lives, their fellow-creatures, and in this way were experts in gauging human character by the face. Those who came last were the most jubilant, since each one was ambitious to become Alan's special factotum, and his hand had not yet been put in the hat. A freckled-faced, tawny-haired youth stood looking with gratified interest at Alan as he drew the one remaining slip from the hat.

"I guess it's not worth while looking at the slip, for I belongs to you, anyway," the boy remarked, showing as he smiled, a mouth full of white, even teeth. "It's worth while waitin' to the last to have such luck. Mayn't I shine yer boots right away?" he inquired, as he edged up affectionately to his new master, quite indifferent to the glances, more or less vindictive, from eleven pairs of eyes. Alan glanced down at his shoes, which were certainly very dusty, for he had been out since early morning and the streets had been only wind-swept. The request was granted a little later when they went to the stateroom to prepare for dinner. The satisfaction of the hungry boys was really infectious when they learned that the delicious odors floating up from the kitchen came from their own dinner in course of preparation.

"Can us fellers have every bit as much as we can eat?" Alan's youthful esquire asked, as he drew his head in the stateroom door for the twentieth time, after regaling his olfactories with the odor.

"Why, certainly. Is that such an unusual experience with you?"

"I guess it is; we never gets just as much first-rate vittels as we can eat, only when rich folks gives us a spread, and that's not more'n once or twice a year. It's tiresome, the gnawin' one gets in their stummick most of the time, but we never forgets the taste of good vittels after once we've et them."

Alan had been present at one of those charity feasts during the winter, and was amused at the way the children seemed to enjoy the repast. He decided to be a witness of the feast the boys were to have that day. They were to have a side table all to themselves, after the others were through, when the remains of the dinner were to be served up to them. His friends had drawn the line at regaling their retainers in first-class style. The poor fellows found it very tedious as they waited on deck for their summons to dinner. Everything was in readiness at last and Alan himself went to call them; his own boy, who responded to the name of Michael, led the way. Already he was assuming patronizing airs because of his good fortune in the matter of a master.

"Is it all et up?" he asked, anxiously; "they've been that long we was afraid there'd not be a bite left for us."

"There will be plenty for all of you."

"Hooray." He murmured his satisfaction softly, but it was none the less genuine. Alan was still young-hearted enough to enjoy it all, and sat at a table some distance away, but which commanded an excellent view of the group as they were presided over by a couple of waiters. The rapidity with which the roast beef, ham, vegetables, entrées, and dessert disappeared would have been amazing to any one unacquainted with the stowing capacity of half-starved boys; some of the food was already on the way into solid tissue, it seemed to Alan, before the feast was ended.

"Now we can most hold out till we get to the end of our voyage," Mike remarked, as he moved back from the table. "Boys, that was better nor any Christmas feast; I never knowed they could make vittels up so good. My, but mustn't it be fine to be rich and have heaps of money!"

"Me fayther says it's the rich find it a sorrer to be lavin' this world, and the young gintlemin yander 'll be lavin' hapes of money." Augustine McGuire was the speaker, and he looked across at Alan, who just then appeared absorbed in his book. "It's moighty quare," Augustine continued, "what good hearts the heretics do be havin'; wan would think they was as good as the praists jest to see the way they do be a conductin' av themselves by ordinary." Augustine was unable to move rapidly, so he settled into a chair and looked around with an air of perfect content. But Mike, who had been reared in less orthodox fashion, stood up manfully for the heretics in general and Alan Rivers in particular. He belonged to the second generation in the line of American-born citizens, and had lost a good deal of the original faith of his forefathers.

"Priests!" he exclaimed, contemptuously. "Me father said, and he knows more than any fellow among ye, that not an archbishop in the lot ud do as much fur us as my young gentleman yander. I'm going to grow up just like him, so I am," and Mike straightened himself as well as the circumstances would allow and looked defiantly at Augustine; but the good dinner had such a mellowing effect that the peace was only slightly ruffled, while Mike satisfied himself with a few threats if any of them dared to call his young gentleman a heretic any more. As Mike was one of the best pugilists of his size in their set, his remarks were generally very respectfully received. The boys sat for some time quietly watching the passengers who, for the most part, were pushing about as restlessly as if business matters still pursued them on shipboard. An occasional remark reached Alan from the group, and contrary to the adage, "listeners never hear any good of themselves," whenever his character was under discussion one of the calendar saints could not have been mentioned more honorably.

They were all in that transition stage of their affections when filial love ceases to absorb the faculties, and the other passion which comes, soon or late, to well-regulated youths of both sexes, had not seized them. Just at that period they were more inclined to hero worship, their hero taking the shape of some stalwart specimen of their own sex. Since Alan filled the requirements better than any one they knew, he came in for a large share of their boyish admiration. It was no special gain to him, but of inestimable benefit to them, for the very good reason that imitation is natural to most young creatures, and they one and all privately adopted him for their model; even Augustine, whose voice had few sympathetic, musical chords, tried his best to modulate its harshness and speak in the quiet way habitual to Mr. Rivers. They were used to activity, and the sense of fullness soon wore off as the tiny builders engaged in their internal mechanism, seizing with avidity the unusual supplies, soon worked them up into blood, so that long before the odor from the supper in preparation began to mingle with the salty atmosphere, they were swarming over every accessible part of the ship and meditating on other achievements than fashioning their characters after their benefactor. The sailors looked askance at these boys, whose faces and speech betrayed their origin, and some of them condescended to inquire what might be the object of their expedition.

"We've come to take care of them young gents you see who go together mostly—the good lookingest you've got on board. They're swell chaps, I can tell you," Mike explained, proudly; "and we're going to a fine large island off somewheres, and we're going to kill things and live outdoors."

"I should say you'd be a sight more care than help. What do you city chaps know about roughing it in camps, and cooking your food over a fire, and handling canoes?"

"I guess we roughs it enough in the city to know how to do it anywheres. Why some of us fellers don't have any homes at all, just sleeps by the night when we've got the change, and when we haven't crawls in anywheres; even steals a chance in the big churches sometimes. But them's the fine places to sleep in of a cold winter's night, over a register, or on a cushion somewhere, only it kind of spiles you for nights when you ain't got such privileges." Mike had a fine pair of eyes, but just now they looked dreamy and sad as he reflected on what lay behind them, and anticipated also what probably awaited them when another winter should have them in its chilly grasp.

"I wish we could go on sailing here for ever and ever, amen," the feeblest-looking of the group said, wistfully. He had a racking cough, and responded when addressed, which was not often, to the name of Dandy Dingwell. His comrades did not esteem him above his value; he was not strong enough to hold his own in a fight or game, and in addition to these physical defects he had a troublesome thing for any slummer, whether man or boy, a sensitive conscience. His mother was a widow and a Protestant, which also told against them in the neighborhood. He was the oldest of four and had to do more than his share to keep starvation from their one room. Such a day as this he had not dreamed of as among the possibilities of this problem he called life, which appeared to him a constant fight to keep soul and body in touch.

He followed the boys around, but always at the end of the procession, sometimes considerably in their rear, for his eyes seemed to look deeper into things and required a longer time to explore whatever strange or delightful might greet them. Today there had been so many of the latter to hold him that now and then he had to take a short cut to catch up with them, but he was content, knowing there were other days for more leisurely survey.

There was one melancholy note in what would otherwise have been perfect harmony, as he remembered his mother and little sisters in the stifling room at home; the dinner they must eat; the stitch, stitch, through the long hours on work overlooked by men on the pattern of the old-time slave drivers—for they labored under the sweating system. He was only a boy, however, and could not always be thinking about others, so he was, on the whole, very happy that day. The gnawing at his stomach, which made that organ a troublesomely conscious part of his anatomy most of the time, had been less pronounced since dinner than for some weeks past—indeed, ever since his cough had been keeping him awake at night and weakening him by day. After a few more such dinners he felt pretty certain the object that was gnawing so industriously would get satisfied and stop.

They had grouped themselves at last on the hurricane-deck and were discussing matters in general, while they watched the distant sails dipping out of sight, or others coming up from the mysterious underworld of waters. The sun was sinking toward the west in a gorgeous bank of opal, amethyst, and ruby-colored clouds, the vessels near-by catching in their white sails these wonderful tints and reflecting them in the water below, while under all the great sea lay, like a tender mother, bearing them on her bosom.

Dandy—the boys had given him this name because his face and hands were generally clean and his hair well combed—did not listen very particularly to their rambling talk, but was going over in his mind those last chapters in the Revelation, of that city built of gold and pearl which

John saw in his vision. Dandy vaguely wondered how it could be more beautiful than this, and if it was, why folks were not more willing to go there, or to have their friends. His mother, for instance, prayed every day of her life, and yet she always seemed frightened if any of them were sick, lest they should die; for his own part, death could never seem other than a friend, now that he had this glimpse of God through his sky.

He was brought back from his reverie by sounds of a sharp altercation between two of the boys; one of them an Italian named Anselmo Lagoni and the other a Polish Jew, Jacob Molensky. They too, by some means, had drifted into spiritual communings which ended in a controversy, and when Dandy became conscious of what was going on they had clinched and were trying, in the fierceness of their religious zeal, to back one another off the deck. The other boys were looking on with much satisfaction. This was the one accustomed pleasure of their lives that never palled on them, and which promised to be a fitting close to this otherwise perfect day. Dandy was terrified; he never could look upon a fight in an alley, out of sight of a policeman, with comfort. Here there were no police to interfere, but something more terrifying, that beautiful but treacherous ocean.

"Oh, boys, don't, don't!" he screamed, rushing to draw them back to the center of the deck; but his strength was too puny to match theirs.

Mike was watching critically. Gauging their strength and his own he decided there would be no difficulty at the right moment of flinging them back amidships and so save the excitement of a splash overboard. Dandy, finding he could not save them, in his terror dashed down the steps to bring some one that could, while Mike started to intercept him, leaving the combatants to their fate, which seemed a dangerous one, as they were very near the side of the steamship. Just then Alan stepped up, and before the boys knew he was in sight, he was holding them at arm's length, his eyes blazing with indignation.

"I have seen what has been going on and, with the exception of Dingwell, there is nothing to choose between you. I waited a few moments to see if there was not a single spark of manliness in any of you."

Mike was standing at the head of the stairs, looking as much a culprit as any.

"For this, every one of you shall be punished; these two most severely for they shall go to bed supperless; the others, with the exception of Dingwell, shall have only bread and milk. The next time such a scene occurs your punishment will not be so light."

He turned and left them to meditate at their leisure. Perhaps it was not a judicious mode of treatment for half-starved boys, but he was angry and in no mood to argue with them. They sat regarding each other stupidly for a short time, then, as the odor of broiled chicken and beefsteak came floating up from those lower regions they realized the comforts they had forfeited.

"Say, boys, what do you s'pose he'll do that'll be worse than to stop our vittels?" Anselmo asked, aghast.

"I don't know what *he'll* do, but I can tell you what *I'll* do, you sneakin' furriners, if you stop our supplies again!" Mike declared with a vim that made the weak-nerved Anselmo resolve that he, for one, would not incur that double punishment. Dandy had a thrill of self-righteous satisfaction pulsate through his attenuated frame; he had so few thrills of any kind but cold and fear that it was quite a new sensation, but it was short-lived; eleven jealous pairs of eyes were presently turned upon him.

"Dandy's going to get all the good things; that's not fair," Anselmo whined. It was a family trait to covet anything they saw going to another, unless it might be poverty or pain, and Anselmo had fallen heir to a full share of this unfortunate characteristic. To go to bed supperless would not be so bad if another of his comrades had not been feasting in his place. Dandy was silent; long ago he had discovered that this was the wisest way for him to accept reproach, but as the boys discussed their grievances, he regretted that he too had not been included in the prohibition, since going without his supper after that superb dinner would have been a very mild infliction. He walked sorrowfully away. As he descended the steps he cast a lingering glance over sky and sea, thinking how much better the heavenly Jerusalem was after all, since within its gates there is nothing but peace.

The boys followed him presently, and together they filed past the supper tables, filled with men and women busy discussing the good things which they too might presently have shared but for the little unpleasantness of a few minutes ago.

CHAPTER IX

ANSELMO

ALAN certainly did not enjoy his own supper, thinking of the disappointed lads, and wished that he had devised some other mode of punishing them. He was naturally a strict disciplinarian, and could not easily break his word either in the matter of reward or punishment; but as he caught a glimpse now and then of a skulking, wistful face peering at the well-spread tables, his purpose wavered. Leaving his own supper half eaten, he arose and beckoned them to follow him to a quiet part of the deck. He then asked:

"Who of you are sorry for what you have done?" He looked around at the group. Up went Dandy Dingwell's hand, but no one else responded.

"Put down your hand, Dingwell, for you have nothing to be sorry for."

"He's nothin' but a sneakin' heretic," Anselmo muttered. He was able to speak the English of the streets as readily as a descendant of the Puritans. Alan heard the remark, but held his gathering wrath in restraint as he continued:

"Boys, I want you to understand that I am not taking you on this holiday excursion for my own pleasure, by any means, and my friends were even less eager to have you than I. I think it is only fair that we should understand each other fully. You are, some of you, at least, old enough to have some manly principles. Now, let me tell you plainly, that if I find you incorrigibly ungrateful and wicked, or if you trespass upon my patience beyond a certain limit, I will send you back by this boat."

As he looked at them he saw a relaxing of the muscles of their faces. That this was the greater punishment in store for them, of which he had spoken, was the thought uppermost in each mind.

"I know you have had little opportunity to learn how to be true, and so I feel the more sorry for you. God has been better to me, giving me a good home, and more than that the Bible, which has been kept from most of you. The only way we can make return to God is to love him and to help others. Now do you understand why it is that I take so much trouble for you?"

He waited for a reply, but they stood stolidly gazing at him, with the exception of Dandy Dingwell.

"Please, sir, that's just the way mother talks," he said, his face shining with joy. "She loves the Bible and prays every day right up to the

Lord. She says it's only God and the living saints that's any good to help people on the earth."

Alan turned to him with his own face suddenly illumined.

"I understand now why you are different from these lads," he said; "it is because you have a Christian mother and the Bible."

Anselmo clenched his fist; he wanted to fight with some one, but prudence got the better of his religious valor. "I could not finish my supper thinking of you," he went on. "I want to do you good, and to help you to something better than the wretched lives before you. Won't you try with me? I would make you good myself if I were able, but you alone can do that, God helping you. Now, will you all promise me to try very hard to be good boys if I take you to the table, and allow the waiter to let you have anything you wish? If I get out of patience with you at any time I want you to forgive me; I am only a young fellow myself and have had very little experience with other boys."

Mike stepped out, and seizing Alan's hand, impulsively exclaimed: "I'll try to be good, and I'll make the rest of 'em toe the mark too."

"No you won't, neither," Anselmo snarled.

Alan turned to him: "Won't you promise to be a better boy if I forgive you now?"

"He's not going to make me good, I can be that without him."

"I shall be sorry to send you back alone in the steamer, Lagoni, but rather than keep you with us to disturb the other lads, I shall do it, and because I modify my promise now, do not presume that I shall do it again."

He turned to speak to Jacob Molensky, but happening to glance in Anselmo's direction, intercepted a most sardonic expression; for the boy was twisting his face out of shape in order to display his malice.

"You have forfeited your supper, to-night, Lagoni, and in all probability you will be back in your old home in a few days into the bargain." Alan spoke sternly; all pity for the vicious bit of humanity, for the time being, dying out of his heart.

Anselmo set up a loud howl which brought him a box on the ears from a deck-hand, shortly after the others had gone into the saloon. He was forced to nurse his wrath and the aching ear in silence after that, but he meditated some means of revenging himself on some one. Dandy Dingwell was the most promising subject because of his physical weakness and his heretical faith. He studied the matter chiefly in reference to him. Meanwhile poor Dandy plied his knife and fork to such good purpose that for the second time that day a very comfortable feeling came over him. Some half-hour later a party of very contented lads filed out on deck and joined Anselmo, whose wrath was at white heat, as he saw them leisurely walking to and fro like the guests he had seen in the fashionable hotels.

"Get out of this," he snarled, as they drew near to him. When he found they paid no attention to his command he arose to leave them. Just as he passed through the door he felt his coat pulled, and swinging around to bestow a blow, he caught sight of Dandy's outstretched hand, in which lay a piece of temptingly frosted cake.

"It's my own. I didn't steal it, but kept it for you," he whispered.

"I won't have your old cake," Anselmo declared, viciously, but nevertheless eyed the cake longingly.

"They are awful good, the boys said," Dandy suggested, still keeping the tempting object in view. It was second nature with him to share any good thing with others, and just now Anselmo appealed the most strongly to his sympathies.

A moment after, the cake was seized without a word of thanks, and he was left standing alone by the door. He did not know that his kindly act had been noticed by more than one pair of eyes, but he turned back with a happy heart to the group of boys sitting outside on the deck enjoying, in an inexpressive sort of way, the far-off delicious glow of the setting sun. It could not be expected that they could have other than a dim appreciation of the wonderful panorama spread before them ; beauty of any kind had seldom appealed to their stunted natures, but perhaps God keeps some untainted places in youthful hearts, no matter how polluted their environment, that can respond at once to perfection in any form.

"What did ye foller him out fer?" Jacob Molensky asked, suspiciously.

"Nothing much." Dandy tried to speak indifferently.

"I seed yer crib the cake, and ye guv it ter him."

"What if he did? 'twas more'n you'd do for a feller as was as mean with ye as he was," Mike said, with a decision that signified the conversation was to terminate.

"Afore I'd crib vittals for that Eyetalian——" Jacob muttered.

"Ye'd eat it yourself. I say, we're going to pattern after Dandy, every mother's son of us, and if ye don't, I'll——" Mike stopped abruptly, for Alan was just then approaching.

He was beginning to find the task of a philanthropist a particularly exasperating one. He had just intercepted Anselmo at some mischief that no other than a street arab of the most vicious proclivities would have attempted—trying to kindle a fire on the lower deck. Meanwhile he swallowed the cake with angry vindictiveness to think it was so good,and that so small a portion had fallen to him. Alan had secured all his matches and set him down in the saloon with the command not to move until he had permission. He was coming now to get Mike to act as policeman until the culprit could be trusted alone, a commission as satisfactory to Mike as it was displeasing to Anselmo. A few vigorous strokes from Mike's sinewy fists did more in the way of immediate amendment than a good deal of moral suasion. There was scarcely honest soil enough in the poor boy's nature for good seed to take root in, and moral suasion had hitherto been an unknown factor in his experience. In the Lagoni family it was a blow in any case, whether the word fitted in or not.

The following morning found Anselmo with an excellent appetite. He felt much better natured, and while waiting to be let out of his room he came to the decision not to forfeit his food, no matter what the provocation. At some future time there would be an opportunity for him to take his revenge without running the risk of such punishment. He had been tucked into a single stateroom by himself, his young gentleman positively refusing to have him. When Alan came to look after him he turned him back to attend to his toilet, a good deal of acquired grime from yesterday's investigations adding to the duskiness of an already swarthy complexion. He applied soap and water vigorously and soon came out smiling as amiably as if he had not marred the harmony of the entire party the preceding day.

By the exercise of a strong will-power and seldom-exercised self-control, he got through his breakfast respectably, but to maintain this outward calm the whole day through, and for many succeeding days, struck him as impossible. From his earliest recollection such an experience had not occurred. In the Lagoni household life was made up of a series of storms merely accentuated by intermittent and brief calms.

The breakfast was so perfect, and his appreciation of it so extreme, that he vaguely speculated, as he filed out on deck with the other boys, if it might not be possible to hold himself so far in check as to secure his share of good things the whole summer through. He found a stronger power than his own fierce will holding him, but the grip of habit was strong, and he knew if he gave way he certainly would suffer for it.

Alan too, had been thinking out the task before him. Anselmo had been an experiment from the first. In the Italian mission school the fierce, uncurbed nature had attracted him. There were in it such possibilities for suffering that he had felt a strong desire to be himself the destiny to change the current from misery toward self-controlled, humanized manhood.

He feared the long, idle hours on shipboard for all the boys, but especially for him. When once out in the country they would have so much to interest them that he was sure their spare energy would not need to be exercised in quarreling. He had provided books and games to amuse them on rainy days and now decided to bring some of them out. Taking Anselmo with him to keep him out of mischief, he went in search of the games. When the trunk was found and opened Anselmo stood with gleaming, covetous eyes looking at the bright-covered books and boxes containing the games.

"Are them all for us?" he asked, greedily.

"Yes."

"Won't you give me mine to keep myself?"

"They are not for any single boy, but for all to enjoy together."

"I want some of them all to myself," he whined.

"Anselmo, I want you to overcome your covetous disposition. Remember, after this the surest way for you to lose anything will be your asking for it. I mean to help you all I can to get the victory over yourself."

"I don't care," he muttered, angrily, but still surveyed the open trunk with hungry eyes. Alan selected a few picture books and games and then, followed by the boy, went to join the others. He soon had them all gathered around the tables in the saloon, taught them some games, and then left them to choose between them and the books for their amusement. For a while things went well, but after a while dissatisfaction arose over the results of the games. Each lad, of course, wanted to be on the winning side and in all probability there would have been a repetition of the disgraceful scene of the preceding day, if the dinner had not, about that time, begun to send forth its fragrance.

Alan suggested to the young men at dinner that each one should take his own boy and look after him for the rest of the day, giving a few lessons on general behavior at the same time, since they were sadly needed. The suggestion did not receive a very cordial response, but they compromised matters by taking them for a couple of hours.

The other passengers on the steamship looked curiously at the company of young men who bore unmistakably, in dress and bearing, the mark of good breeding, and at the boys following them who, although their garments were new, were as clearly stamped as belonging to the other extreme of the social scale. The captain was interviewed by a good many on the subject, to all of whom he was forced to return the extremely unsatisfactory answer:

"It is that young fellow in gray who seems to have them all in charge. I only know they are a lot of Brown students going down to Newfoundland for the summer. I have an idea that he is religious and is trying to reform the entire crowd, slummers and all, but I can tell you he has a tough job on hand, for there's mischief in the whole lot. I can see that as plain as I can that gull."

But as the captain and passengers watched them day after day they were forced to admit that the young fellow in gray was equal to the task and had an ascendency over students and slummers alike that compelled them to yield to his will.

They could not comprehend how one so young, and evidently belonging to the favored classes, could, of his free will, assume such thankless service. The betting class on board directed their attention to him, and for some time quite heavy sums of money were pooled upon his motive in the enterprise. There was some chagrin and a good deal of perplexity when one, bolder than the rest, approached him with the inquiry what his motive for undertaking such a task really was, and was answered as frankly as if it had been about his views on politics, or the commonplace concerns of every day.

After a while each boy began to follow his special master, and before very long they developed so strong a pride of ownership that they were ready, at the slightest provocation, to enter the lists in his favor by a trial of their own strength.

Several bloodless duels had been fought in out-of-the-way parts of the steamship, when Mike assured them it was not worth their while to debate the subject any longer, since his Mr. Rivers was worth all the rest of them put together.

CHAPTER X

WITH GUN AND ROD

THEY left the steamship at St. John's, where they found Gabe waiting for them. He surveyed the huge party doubtfully, especially the boys, and assured Alan it would take several canoe loads of food to last them two months, not reckoning the unlimited supplies of fish and game ready to their hand.

"We shall take a large boat for the boys and the provisions; I will not trust them to canoes."

"It will cost great lot of money," Gabe said, anxiously.

"There are thirteen of us to share the expense. I think you will find us equal to it."

Gabe shook his head doubtfully. "You only boys, all of you. They not mind what you say."

"We will see," was the calm reply; and so, against his own judgment, Gabe undertook the conveyance of youths and stores to the same camping grounds used the previous summer.

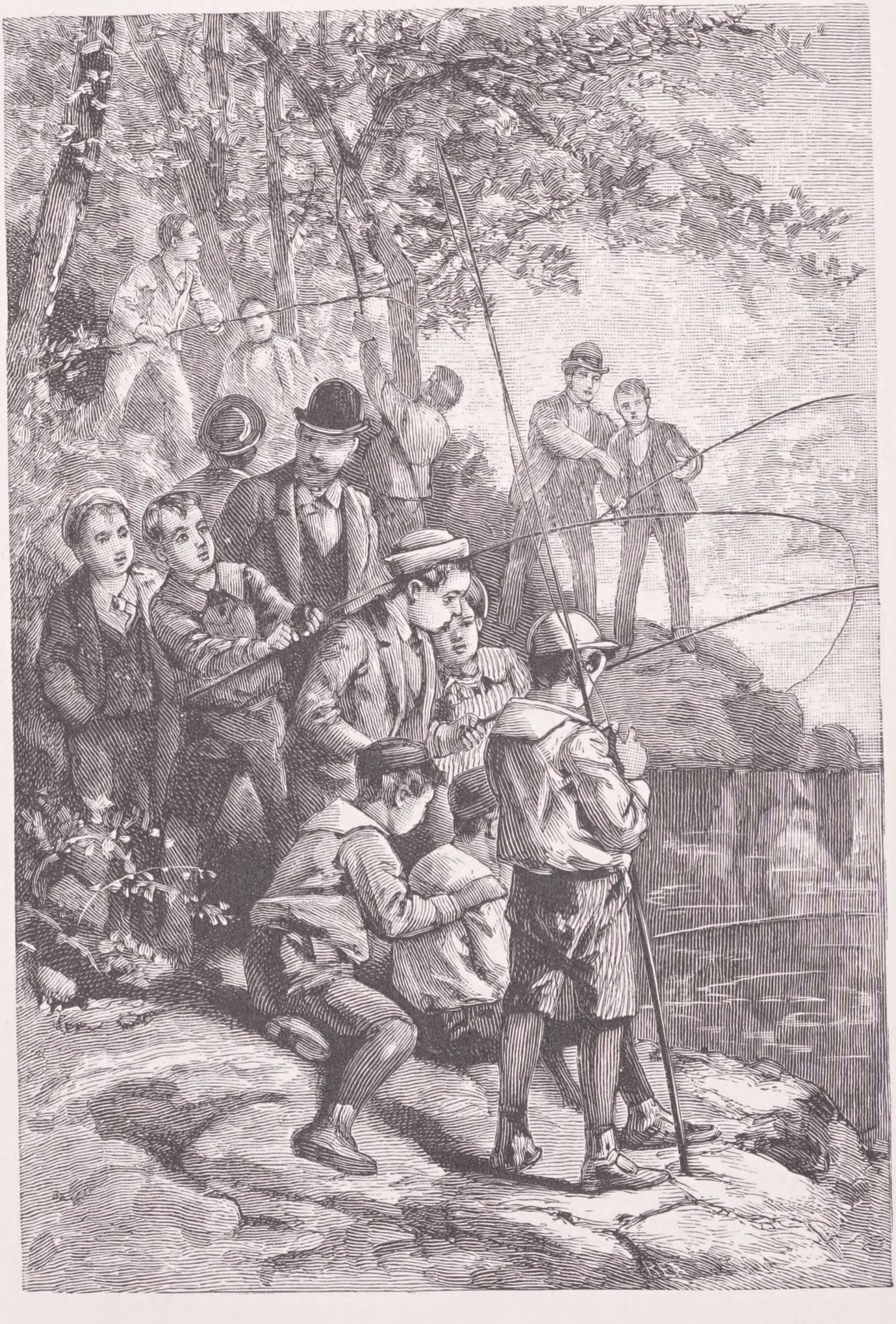
The trip in the schooner was a mixed experience. The sea was rough and some of them were sick; the quarters were crowded, and Alan was kept in constant anxiety lest some of his charge should fall overboard, as most of them ran the risk of doing, being both venturesome and ignorant of schooner life. They reached Bonavista at last, and every one, down to the cook in the galley, breathed a sigh of relief when the vessel was tied to the wharf and the last of the passengers left the deck.

All this was changed when that same afternoon they started inland. The boys were nearly wild with delight as they rowed up the winding river. The air, unstirred by other human beings, was like a wonderful tonic. The green depths of the unbroken forest, shutting them in like the walls of some vast cathedral, roused increasing wonder at the immensity of nature. They could scarcely be convinced that each hour they were passing through fresh aisles of the forest cathedral.

" Are you sure that we're not winding round and coming over the same places ? I've seen trees and rocks like that a dozen times to-day," Dandy said at last, bewildered utterly.

"Yes, Dandy, every boat length takes us past trees you have never seen before," Alan assured him ; "besides, rivers do not have the habit of winding around and doubling upon themselves."

" I wish we could come here and pick up the wood," Anselmo said, covetously. Such waste of firewood as he saw along the shore was enough to make any boy's heart ache who was in the habit



The Master of Deeplawn. Page 119.

"The rest of the party proceeded to catch fish."

of supplying the family kindlings from chance gleanings in street and by-way.

They halted for an early supper, tied up their boat and canoes to the trees along shore, and then, near to the water's edge, Gabe and the other boatmen built a fire, while the rest of the party proceeded to catch fish. What raptures excited the boys as one after another dangled trout varying in length from four to twelve inches. It did not take them long to get enough for the entire party, and how they did enjoy that meal! The poor lads were not perplexed with napkins and other bewildering table appointments that had made eating on shipboard a mixed pleasure. They carried their plates, filled with fried trout, pork scraps, and roasted potatoes, out of sight of critical eyes, and proceeded to enjoy these delicacies unfettered by knife or fork. There was plenty of water rushing wastefully past in which to remove all traces of the use of fingers. Mike and Dandy stayed manfully at their post; the latter had been accustomed to knives and forks always, the former was resolved on doing everything, as far as possible, exactly like his young master.

Gabe had watched the boys with curious and absorbed interest. He hovered near while they ate, and certainly was not prepossessed with their aboriginal deportment. At the first opportunity he asked Alan if they were Christians.

"With the exception of Dingwell they certainly are not."

"Are they Protestant?"

"No, they are all Catholics except two."

"May I talk to them about religion?"

"Certainly; but are you not a Catholic?"

"No, no," with a very emphatic shake of the head; "I Protestant."

"Why, how is that? I thought all the Indians here were Catholics. I never thought last year of asking you about it."

"I love the Bible. The minister, he tell me God has my name in book. I take ministers from port to port in my boat; they tell me of the Lord Jesus. I hear them preach and pray. Then I take their religion; it makes me clean and happy here." He laid his hand on his heart. "Are you Protestant?"

"Oh, yes, and I love the Lord Jesus too. That is why I bring all these young men and boys with me. You may help me a great deal with the boys. Talk to them of what you once were and what you are now."

"Yes, I tell them Catholic religion no good for Indian, no make him clean here and happy; Protestant religion do both. Indian and white man just the same inside. I show them how to fish and hunt—tell them stories about Indians—then I tell them about God."

"I wonder you never told me about this last summer."

"You not talk to me either."

Alan smiled; certainly it was his place as much as the Indian's to speak about religion.

"We pray for them. God hears prayers; book says so."

Alan nodded his head in silence; he was getting a lesson from this dusky aborigine that few of the learned college dons had taught him.

They embarked soon, and in the early twilight again moored their boats and this time pitched their tents. When all the work was done, Gabe drew Alan to one side and said: "Our missioners always pray at night, under the open sky, on the snow, anywhere."

Alan's face flushed. Did Gabe mean to ask him to do the same? He merely said "Yes," with a rising inflection of voice.

"You pray to him?"

"I am not a minister."

"You Christian; you tell me so."

Alan turned abruptly away and plunged into the dense forest. Gabe saw the look of dismay on the young man's face and followed at a distance, thinking, perhaps he might forget himself and go so far that he would be lost in the woods; but he saw him instead, throw himself on the ground, and knew he had come for prayer.

Gabe assumed the statuesque pose natural to his race, and lifted his heart in prayer that victory might be gained. At last Alan rose and went back to camp, Gabe silently following.

The boys were scattered up and down the river, their shouts mingling shrilly with the songs of home-coming birds that were pouring their vesper hymns through the leafy colonnades.

To say that the boys were happy would only half express the rapture that was reaching even to those dim regions of the soul that had never been stirred until now, for the reason that filth, and discord, and the poverty enclosed by grimy brick walls, could not possibly supply any food to the poetry and love of beauty that God has seen fit to plant in the dreariest, as well as the richest souls. Alas, in how many it is not awakened until other worlds open all the possibilities for bliss God has in reserve for us!

Dandy Dingwell took his joy more silently than the others for, mixed with it all was the memory of the pale, weary mother stitching in that vile atmosphere, with meagre fare, no rippling river for a lullaby, or singing birds to waken her in the early dewy morning.

Anselmo forgot for a while to fight. There was such breadth and breathing room here, with such lavishness of beauty, that even his turbulent heart was for the time quieted ; besides, the other boys had no desire to quarrel, which made it all the easier for him to keep the peace.

Alan now got out his cornet from among quite a number of musical instruments he had provided, and gave the signal agreed upon at supper to summon all the party to camp. Soon the young men and lads came dropping in, somewhat surprised at the unexpected call. Some of them noticed that he was pale, but they were none of them prepared for the announcement he made when the restless boys had become quieted. He spoke even sternly, because of his very nervousness. "Boys, I have decided to read a chapter in the Bible to you every night, and to offer a prayer to God. I shall expect you to be always present and to listen quietly."

All the young gamins of the company had haunted the various missions, more for what they might get and the disturbance they could make than for any other reason. Visions of the uproar they had raised in those places flitted before their minds, and the prospect of such a service seemed an addition to their good time. There were sundry winks and grimaces at the beginning, watched over by Gabe; then an occasional snicker or muttered imprecation was heard; but Alan read on, apparently paying no attention to anything but the words he was reading.

Anselmo was beginning to grow hilarious when he felt himself seized, and before he had time to scream he looked up into the face of young Mr. Blake, to whom he was supposed to belong for the time being. A low command to be quiet was given in such a way that Anselmo subsided directly into most decorous silence, for there was a suggestion that he might receive such a castigation as he had aforetimes had from his grown-up brother Angelo. He soon wished the prayer would cease, and wondered why praying had never seemed like this before. He shivered, although the air was balmy, while he wondered why the holy priests never made him feel that way, and then there crossed his mind the first vague doubt if the heretics after all might not be right.

The prayer ended, they all rose silently, and soon the entire group had drifted away to their separate amusements. The boys by a common impulse gathered around a huge, uprooted tree that formed a splendid hiding place, with the river rolling just at their feet. Each one was anxious to compare sensations with some one else, and as they one by one confessed how they had felt, it was both a relief and perplexity to find that most were similarly impressed. Even Jacob Molensky acknowledged that he had never felt quite so solemn before, and asked if the New Testament was all as good as what Mr. Rivers had just read. The lads looked confused, scarcely liking to confess that the Testaments, New or Old, were alike sealed books to them.

"It's every bit as good, only some few chapters with names in them," Dandy ventured to reply at last. He had not been appealed to, but he was the only one who knew anything about it.

"I wish I had one, I'd read it while I was here in the bush, and nobody'd know," Jacob said, wishfully.

"Blamed if I'm going to read the Bible! I'll have something else to do, catching fish and killing things in the woods," said, contemptuously, a bullet-headed boy, with a vicious type of face, who responded to the name of Patrick Sweeney.

His remark had a steadying effect on the boys' nerves, and the impression caused by the prayer very soon wore off, so that when the call was given to come in for the night they had, to all appearance, settled back into their accustomed mood, defensive and offensive.

The next evening, later than the prayer, they found to their dismay there was an additional Scripture lesson awaiting them. They were summoned into the main tent, and found Alan with a heap of Bibles on a stand beside him, which had been improvised out of boxes. A lamp was burning and rude seats of limbs arranged around the table.

"How many of you boys can read?"

Instantly every hand went up.

"Every evening just before bedtime we will all assemble here and read together out of the Bible."

It was indeed a wonder that they submitted at all to this decree and the fact that they peaceably took off their hats and sat down on the rough seats provided, deserves notice. They began to read stumblingly at the second chapter of Matthew, and the word to leave off was not spoken until they had completed the chapter.

"That will do for to-night," Alan said at last, to their immense relief.

"Will we have to read that much every night?" Anselmo asked, with a frown.

"Yes."

"Me fayther wouldn't want me to be a readin' of it, if he knowed," he of the red hair and freckled face feebly remonstrated.

"While you are with me you will be expected to do what I wish in this matter. Any boy who desires may return in the morning with the boatmen to Bonavista, and I will make arrangements for him to be forwarded to St. John's and on to Providence," Alan replied, glancing around at the clouded faces. Several of them had been on the point of seconding their comrade's suggestion, but thought better of it, and not a word was spoken.

The following morning they repaired to their council chamber, at the root of the upturned tree, and discussed the question with great seriousness, each one of them thinking some one else might voice the religious scruples of the rest. The controversy soon grew heated, and at last they came to blows and profane language. They were in the midst of it when the Indian appeared and appealed directly to Dandy, who, with Jacob, had kept quiet during the debate, to know the cause of the disturbance.

"It's their religion they are fighting about." Dandy spoke excitedly, for just then he spied Anselmo on the ground, and Mike pommelling him unmercifully. Gabe did not wait for further enlightenment, but went in among them, pushing them right and left. When comparative order had been restored, Mike began an explanation, but Anselmo was on his feet in an instant; he was smarting from Mike's well directed blows, externally, as well as from certain remarks respecting his countrymen in general, and the Lagoni family in particular. Gabe turned and gave him a vigorous shaking.

"You be quiet," he said, sternly, still holding the boy.

Anselmo began heaping up whispered epithets in Italian, to which Gabe paid no heed, but listened calmly to Mike's incoherent remarks.

"You got no religion to fight about. You no better than heathen, may be not so good."

"I guess we're just like you," Anselmo said, as he tried to free himself from the slender, nervous fingers of the Indian.

"No, not like me. I like you once; but I know better now. Good men tell me about God; how he loves Indian just same as white man."

"Were you a Catholic once, like us?" Mike asked, incredulously.

"Yes; we Indians nearly all that."

"What made you turn?"

Gabe sat down beside them. "I tell you all about it, maybe you turn too some day. Mr. Rivers tell me Catholics often turn Protestants."

"It's a lie," Anselmo hissed.

"Mr. Rivers not lie," Gabe said, calmly. "He know a lot better than little, dirty boy."

"You be quiet or you will catch it by-and-by," Mike said, sternly. Anselmo was forced to subside into sullen silence.

The rest of the boys, nothing loth to hear a story, grouped themselves comfortably around Gabe and waited for him to begin. He sat for a moment absorbed in thought, the boys curiously watching the dusky face. His use of language was limited, showing a sublime disregard of conjunctions, prepositions, and adverbs, but this in no wise lessened the effect of his sentences. The boys from time to time exchanged conscious glances. He described more minutely than they could the prayers, genuflections, confessionals, and all the paraphernalia of the Romish ritual, which he had once regarded with a reverence amounting to adoration, and for which now he had only words of sorrow. He told them of the brave, self-denying preachers whom he had first despised and afterward learned to revere, whom he was employed to guide over those stormy waters and through the wilderness, from hamlet to hamlet along the coast. How at first he refused to be present in camp at morning and evening worship, but by degrees their brotherliness had won his grudging affection and he used to creep in to prayers in a shamefaced way. After a while, growing bolder, he used to attend the meetings held in the kitchens of the hardy fishermen, where the fervor of their devotions wakened in him sensations never experienced before. It was a long story and he took his time. He liked to tell his experience, and never before had he found a more attentive group of listeners, or any for whom he felt such sympathy. The lads received his message in silence, even Jacob Molensky listened respectfully while he told how much the Lord Jesus had done for him.

The story ended, the boys dispersed, only Dandy remaining to talk a little longer.

"The boys are hard to get on with." Dandy spoke sadly.

"Make them do better."

"How can I?"

"Pray, that is best way; then live."

"They won't know that I am praying, and they don't watch me enough to know how I live." Dandy sat thinking very busily; no amount of good living on his part would influence Anselmo, he felt certain. Moreover, he was not anxious to have the fiery little Italian to dwell with him eternally, even in heaven. Since there was a place set apart for such persons, it might be just as well to let them take their course.

Gabe's next words made him heartily ashamed of his thoughts.

"I feel most pity for the dark, wicked boy. Devil got strong grip on him. We try to help him."

"Don't you think it would be better to try some one likelier to be good?" Dandy asked, with some twinges of conscience.

"No, he have hardest work to get up there." He pointed skyward.

"I don't think he ever can; he is so bad every way."

"You never hear about publican? the Lord able to save everybody."

"The publican prayed and wanted to be good;

but Anselmo don't want to be better. He won't let you help him."

Gabe sat looking silently out across the river. He had more thoughts than words to clothe them, and he could see God's limitless love reaching far beyond Anselmo's depravity. Presently there came angry voices from down the river, and they both started to find what disturbing element was now at work. Anselmo and Mike were fighting again, Anselmo, as usual, getting sadly worsted in the combat. His face was bleeding, but Mike, with angry distorted features, was raining the blows pitilessly on the helpless boy. Gabe seized one in each hand and held them quivering and squirming at arm's length. He paid no attention to their explanations, but stood there as motionless and silent as a bronze statue, the other boys also silenced by the stern face. Mike and Anselmo watched their comrades as their feelings gradually passed into terror.

Dandy was not frightened, for he knew that the Indian was a Christian. He was delighted to see a new expression creeping into Anselmo's face, though what it meant he was not able to tell. Maybe this mysterious Indian might be able to work a transformation in the lad's nature that no one else could. Perhaps he had been brought here for just that purpose. Dandy grew so interested over his fancies that he threw himself on the ground, willing to wait there any length of time.

When the last of the other boys had disappeared through the trees, Gabe dropped on his knees, the two lads following his example. Loosening his hold on Mike for an instant he took off his hat, lifted his face to the sky and began to pray. The words were not like those that Mr. Rivers had used the night before. They were broken and the grammar, even to Dandy's observation, very defective ; but underneath the mere speech was a great heart that brought its burden right into the presence of the King.

Dandy was watching Gabe, for the time forgetting the limp figures on each side of him, when a quick motion on Mike's part drew his attention, and he was astonished to see that sturdy youth melted into tears. Anselmo was looking up into Gabe's face, his fierce eyes gleaming under the clustering curls, his face ashen with fear or some equally strong emotion. The boys were beginning to recognize some awe-inspiring power outside of the visible world, a wonderful Being to whom the Indian was speaking directly, talking about them and entering into very distasteful particulars about their moral defects. It was a long prayer, but at last it was ended and Gabe arose, put on his hat, and walked away into the forest. The three boys watched him out of sight, then looked furtively at each other. At last Anselmo broke the silence :

"I say, it wasn't fair for him to tell all that about us, and now he's gone off to tell some more, likely. I'd enough sight sooner be a Catholic, for then you know when you're forgiven, for the priest tells you so."

"Maybe the priest don't know any more about it than we do ourselves," Mike said, indifferently. He had half a mind to follow Gabe and ask him to pray for him some more. It was so hard to do right, especially when Anselmo was so aggravating, and it seemed necessary to administer punishment when it was so richly deserved, besides, he had other temptations for which Anselmo was in no way to blame.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE RIVER

WHEN Alan and his friends set out on their holiday trip they left themselves free to extend their stay in those vast inland wilds as long as they chose. The air was so bracing, the days so full of adventure or delicious dreamlike repose, whichever they preferred, that they scarcely desired to go back sooner than necessary to the haunts of civilization.

They would go on long exploring expeditions into the interior, Gabe invariably being the leader on these excursions. All the boys were so unwilling to stay in camp to take care of the stuff, that after a while the rewards and punishments were adjusted by going with the others, or else remaining ingloriously in camp; a young man whose turn had come to be in charge remaining with them. There were always enough boys in disgrace to keep him company.

It was only by dint of wonderful self-control that Anselmo was able to go at all; but this desirable end was at last achieved. When he started, one glorious August morning, in the early hush before the sun had risen, and while the morning star still hung dimly above the treetops on the other side of the river, he received a most valuable lesson. The week-long battle that had been waged, his nobler self against the baser, was crowned now with glad victory, but as he glided up the river in the boat he had thoughts new and somewhat painful, notwithstanding the gladness he felt at being there. The world was so still about him, save the musical plash of the water, and the notes of the awakening birds, one could fancy that one might almost catch the sound of the growing leaves, or the thunder of rolling suns.

All the world about Anselmo, the sounding water, the trees leaning loverlike toward the mirror of the river at their roots, the fringes of delicious bits of greenery, mossy knolls, ferns with their long slender stems and delicate fronds taking now the russet tinge of approaching autumn, came to his consciousness as vividly as if their reality had never been seriously questioned by philosophers.

He had his own vague thoughts on these subjects, as tantalizing perhaps as those of the practised philosopher. These scenes appealed to subtle faculties that the bits of sky caught through openings in brick and mortar, the crowded, dusty streets and shockingly defaced tenements that he had called home, had never awakened. This pure air and these healthful surroundings after his lifelong encounter with defilement, were powerful factors in the awakening of his nature, which Alan's teachings, together with Gabe's practical common-sense talks, strengthened more than any one knew.

Mike and Jacob and Dandy were of the party that day with nearly all the other lads. This trip had been particularly coveted by every one of the party. Gabe had doubted if it were safe to take so many in the boat and canoes, but nearly all of them could swim and the river for the most part was so narrow there was little danger of squalls reaching them. He had taken the precaution to group his passengers, as they embarked, as safely as possible. Dandy and Anselmo were put together, for Gabe had found there was always less disturbance in Dandy's vicinity than elsewhere among the boys.

There were merry shouts across the water from boat to canoes; restless hands impeded somewhat the men who used the oars and paddles, for the boys were full of life and anxious to be meddling. It was impossible to keep them quiet.

They had nearly reached the end of their journey when, towering far into the blue sky before them, they saw the mountain that was the objective point of that day's expedition. Gabe had described the view to be obtained from its summit as so extensive that they were anxious to see for themselves if his report was not exaggerated. Another attraction was the fact that he assured them only the most expert climber could scale its rugged sides. The boys were to be left midway, where the ascent became most precipitous, in charge of one of the young men whose lungs were too weak to bear such a strain.

While every eye was fixed on the hill before them there was a sudden splash, followed by a shrill scream, and a shock of black hair disappearing beneath the water was all they could see when they looked in the direction of the cry. A moment later there was another splash and Gabe, divesting himself of shoes and coat, jumped in after Anselmo. The boy in his restlessness had reached too far over the side of the boat and, being unable to swim, sank directly.

Every paddle was held suspended, and anxious faces watched Gabe as he floated on the water, his keen eyes watching for the boy. It seemed a good while to the watchers, but it was in reality only a few seconds until he had Anselmo in his grasp and was swimming for the shore, the canoes all following in his wake. The boy had lost consciousness, but the time was so short between the accident and rescue, it was not long until the black eyes looked up, bewildered at the group of anxious faces bending near. He shivered; for the morning was a trifle chilly and he was already cold when he fell into the river and, at the best of times, his vitality was low.

Alan wrapped a rug around him and lifted him into the boat again, then they pushed off and started on their way. A silence had fallen over the merry crowd; there were no longer gay snatches of music and laughter in response to the notes of the feathered songsters in the trees. Amid the springing life, death had just intruded its grim front and looked at them from those dangerous depths whose waters murmured so cheerily against their birch canoes. The lads sat circumspectly on their narrow seats, and gave no further trouble until they had landed at the base of the mountain.

As they stepped on shore Alan looked down at the limp figure in his arms, on the pale face and drooping lids and drew him closer to him, for the lad's helplessness appealed strongly to his sympathy. Then he looked up and said:

"The rest of you can go on and climb the mountain. I will stay and look after Anselmo."

Gabe remonstrated. "You wanted to see it more than anybody. Let some one else stay."

"No, I will stay," he said decisively, as he laid Anselmo carefully down in the canoe on a bed they had fitted for him out of overcoats and rugs.

The party was eager to begin the ascent, and without waiting any longer they took their provisions and started. Dandy followed a little way and then halted. He looked back at Alan, left lonely on the bank, and forward at the rapidly disappearing party. He too, was as eager as the others to look down from the mountain side on the scene below, but it seemed ungrateful for all of them to go away thinking only of their own pleasure and leave the two alone ; besides, a day alone with Mr. Rivers had in it possibilities for enjoyment that no mountain climbing or views could possibly have. He watched them far up the mountain side, their cheerfulness fully restored. Gay laughter and shouts floated down on the clear morning air.

Alan took a book from his pocket, and seating himself on a mossy bed near the canoe, appeared to have forgotten both Anselmo and the merry crowd of excursionists. Dandy sat for a long time watching the tiny ripples breaking along the shore and the shadows shortening on the hillside as the sun crept up the sky. He began to think he had been foolish to miss the fun of the long day's jaunt with the others, since it bade fair to be a very dull day—Anselmo sleeping heavily in the canoe, and Mr. Rivers apparently as unconscious of the world about him as the sleeping boy.

But in the deep hush that enfolded him, Dandy began to find that there were other pleasures in this world besides mere noise and activity. The very silence seemed to open communion with nature. While listening to the different sounds of bird and insect and the sighing wind among the trees, he began wondering why God had filled these vast solitudes so full of happy life, wondering too, where each twig would find a shelter when the storms of winter were raging. Was it possible that they were all frozen, so that fresh creation would be necessary each succeeding springtime?

He looked across at Alan at last, wishing to ask him about all these new questions when, to his surprise, he found the clear brown eyes regarding him intently, and with such a kindly look that he felt more than repaid for his sacrifice.

"I thought until just now that I was alone here with Anselmo; why didn't you go with the others?"

Dandy looked down shyly, but with rosy cheeks managed to answer: "I thought, sir, it would be lonesome for you here all day alone."

"That was very thoughtful of you, but I am afraid you will be lonely yourself; however, I appreciate your generosity more than I can make you understand, I fear."

Dandy's face brightened at this, and he said: "I have been listening quietly here and looking around me, it's so unlike when the boys are making a noise. It seems I've never seen things just this way before. It's a curious sort of world, don't you think it is, sir?"

"In what way do you mean is it curious?"

"Oh, well, it seems so much of everything going to waste here, wood and water and green things, and there's so much more air and sunshine than we have at home. It'll be bad enough in those close rooms where mother and the girls are to-day. Why, the broad avenues, where the swell folk live and that us fellows thought must be near as good as heaven itself—perhaps better, for all we knew—aren't equal to this. They haven't that beautiful river and the green places away among the trees, nor the woodsy smell, nor the birds, only the prisoner kind that are caged up."

"You are quite a poet, my boy."

"I don't know, sir; but I think it's fine, just you and me talking here together!" The boy's face was a picture of delight.

"Yes, we are becoming very good friends, and I hope we will have pleasure in each other's company a great many years, even long after our bodies will have gone to dust."

"Do you mean in heaven, sir?" Dandy asked, reverently.

"Yes, in heaven. We know that death is not far away, although it may seem hard to realize it now when we are young and strong, but think of all the generations that have lain down in the long sleep since Job asked: 'If a man die, shall he live again?'"

"They will live again—all who have died? Don't you think so, sir?"

"I do not think anything about it, I simply accept it, tremendously impossible as it may seem to me, since Christ has told us that he is the resurrection and the life."

"I like to talk to you, sir; you seem to make God and heaven very near to me."

"Do you think how rich God must be when he has so much beauty to bestow on these out-of-the-way places?"

"I do not think I ever thought of it, sir; but isn't it just as easy, when he was making things, to make them beautiful?"

"We know nothing of the effort required in creation, but looking at such lavish expenditure of beauty sets me thinking." Alan then sank into silent thought. Dandy waited awhile for him to continue and then asked, timidly:

"Would you please to tell me what it makes you think of?"

"Many things: first, perhaps, how much God must have in store for us when we come to see him face to face; and then I think how rich and glorious he must be, and how wonderful it is that he should let me talk with him every day."

"Does God talk with you?" Dandy was on his feet now close to Alan's side and looking down at him in deep amazement.

"Yes, every day, many times a day. It was he who told me to bring you lads out here." Dandy stood some moments in silence, and then he said, softly:

"I think I understand. Wasn't it good of him to remember us in this way?"

"Ah, my boy, it is his goodness that makes my heart so glad always—in spite of everything."

"You surely have nothing, sir, to make you sad. The boys tell me you are very rich, and you are strong and so handsome." He ended with a little break in his voice. He scarcely knew if it were just the thing to mention that last fact, but Mr. Rivers did look such a splendid specimen of young manhood that Dandy felt it was more than could be expected of him to keep silent on the subject. He was suddenly brought back to stern realities by Mr. Rivers' next remark.

"Riches are sometimes the ruin of people—a far worse curse than poverty—and they have been ever since the days of Dives and Lazarus." Dandy was surprised at the bitterness with which he spoke. Neither could he understand how riches and good looks, two of the coveted gifts of life in which he was painfully deficient, unless a pair of luminous brown eyes might be excepted, could fail to make their possessor other than perfectly happy with his allotments.

A movement in the canoe interrupted their conversation. Anselmo had wakened, and not finding himself in a comfortable frame of mind, was expressing discontent in a way more in keeping with his accustomed surroundings. Alan went to him, followed closely by Dandy.

"What did you let me go to sleep for? I want to climb the mountain too," he said, fretfully.

Alan made no reply, but took the hot hand in his, laying his finger on the pulse.

"My head aches and I'm tired," he said, laying his head down again on the pillow of coats. Alan looked at him anxiously. The pulse was high and already the face was crimson with fever. He could hardly understand why a brief plunge in that warm river should affect the lad so seriously. Probably it did no harm, with the exception of the shock to a system weakened by long-continued privation. Whatever the cause, Anselmo had every symptom of being on the brink of a severe illness. It seemed strange how much perplexity the boy had been to him from the very first. but as he bent over him trying, if possible, to add in some way to his comfort, a glance into the sorrowful face made his heart as tender toward him as it would have been to even Dandy under similar circumstances.

They had their dinner together, Alan and Dandy, but Anselmo refused to taste of food. He seemed to be growing very much worse as the day wore on, and Dandy found there was little chance for another quiet chat with Mr. Rivers. As he sat and watched Alan bathing the boy's hot temples, he said :

"You are almost as kind as one's own mother could be. Had you a very good mother, sir?"

"I was too young when I lost my mother to remember her, but I have been told she was one of the loveliest women that God blesses our poor world with."

"That must be the reason you are so good. You are a strong man and yet you seem like a woman too; you are so gentle and yet stern when we do wrong."

"You are very frank in your criticisms."

"I'd rather talk things to the people themselves, especially kind things. It don't do much good to talk faults over to others and then make believe we don't see anything. In some ways it is not a very nice world to live in, the people are so hard to get on with."

"Yes, but all we need be anxious about is to do our work for God's approval."

"It seems a long time to wait to get our pay for being good when we die," Dandy said wearily.

Alan smiled, but did not reply, for he was needed just then by Anselmo, who seemed to be growing delirious.

It was a very tired company of youths who came trooping down the mountain side about an hour before sunset. The day had been a very joyous one however, they every one agreed, and each in his own way voiced his ideas of what was its best feature.

They had caught trout from the mountain streams. From rocky peaks far up in the mountain, upon which the late golden glow was now resting, they had caught glimpses of the distant sea and vast areas of inland wildernesses. There had been merry scrambles over giant trees prostrate in their path, and as they climbed higher, the open spaces, where all around them nature stood silent in her vastness, had brought a hush, sometimes, over the noisiest spirits among them. To complete all, there was the merry dinner, which had a flavor that only dinners eaten under such fine conditions can have—appetites whetted by joyous exercise of every tiny muscle in the body, with air as pure as that breathed by the patriarchs when the world was young.

They ceased their merry shouts when they came near enough to see the figure lying in the boat. Gabe was at the rear of the procession, and was the last to join the circle that had formed around Alan and his charge. His trained eye saw at once that it was a case of very serious illness. He quickly drew the lads away and had them embark as swiftly and silently as possible, then launching the boat in which Anselmo lay, they started homeward.

CHAPTER XII

IN THE BORDER LAND

THERE were days and nights of anxious watching after that. Gabe had assured them it would be dangerous to start on the homeward journey with the lad in such a state. He had nursed many a one through long sicknesses, and in this case felt confident that he could accomplish as much toward a cure as any of the doctors in the little port, their nearest approach to civilization. As for the chemist's drugs, he had whole acres of the best medicines in their natural state in the forest around them. With these ready to his hand and with the knowledge of their healing properties, he felt confident that he could fight the battle with disease successfully. Alan felt a confidence in him that was purely instinctive, since he had never seen anything of his skill in this direction, none of them, thus far, having had any need of a physician since they left Boston.

But in spite of Gabe's skill and tireless care, Anselmo grew weaker. The boys were permitted to steal to his bedside, one or two at a time, to look at the white face with the gleaming eyes, in which there was no light of recognition. A hush fell upon the camp. The merry shout or angry exclamation seldom broke the enfolding stillness.

They would go off in the early morning, with their lunch, on long expeditions in charge of some members of the party clever enough to guide their way back by the pocket compass and the sun. They were all glad to escape from the camp where the shadow of death might be hovering, seeming so out of place here amid all the abundant life—far different from the slums they called home, where death was a regular and very often a welcome visitor. The boys would have long talks together as they trudged along or lay resting on the mossy banks watching the river flowing steadily to the sea. They would speculate about Anselmo's chances for recovery, with perplexed questionings as to his destiny in case of death. They wondered if the prayers that were being offered for him every day were, after all, any good to him when he could not understand a word of them, and whether other people's prayers were much help to one, anyway.

"Blest if I can see what good they can do for a fellow," Bob White said. He was one of the most skeptical of the crowd in matters religious and social.

"The Bible says we are to pray for all men. Mr. Rivers told me that one day himself, and he says it must do good or we wouldn't be told to do it.'' Dandy stood up for orthodoxy on all occasions. "Maybe it helps keep us more in God's mind; you see he has so much to look after.''

"If he forgot like that I guess we'd be a sight worse off 'n we are,'' Bob responded, gloomily.

Jacob began complaining then about Anselmo.

"He's been giving trouble from the first. Now he's just spoiling everything," he spoke in an unreasoning way, as if poor Anselmo could help being sick.

"What nonsense to be a talking that way,'' Mike said. "You hate that Eyetalian so bad you'll be blamin' him next time it rains, I expect.''

"Gabe told Mr. Rivers, when I was in Anselmo's tent this morning, that we'd know by to-morrow if he'll live or die," Dandy said.

This announcement had a very subduing effect on the boys. Jacob looked conscience-smitten because of his remarks, and the others began talking about what it must seem like to be starting out all alone, without one's body even to keep company with the spirit, on the long journey to another world.

"Do you suppose he will look at us before he starts?" a superstitious little fellow asked anxiously. He was always on the lookout for ghosts and disagreeable apparitions of all kinds. The fact that his diligence in watching for them had never been rewarded in no way discouraged him.

"I guess he'll have other things to look after that'll be more important, but maybe he won't die; don't let us bother about it till we have to."

Bob White's way of looking at it cheered them somewhat, but nevertheless, painful expectancy was in every boy's mind, and he of the fearful heart concluded that he would lie awake all night and keep watch near the door of the tent. Frightened though he might be, he would dearly like to see how Anselmo looked when free from his body; he fancied he would have a very cross-looking soul. The boys all seemed anxious to keep as close together as possible, as though they were fearful if left alone they might catch a glimpse of the death angel. All day long they could talk of nothing save those topics perplexing alike to philosophers and the ignorant child—the "afterward" of death—the loneliness of the soul in the regions beyond. A few of them, like Bob White, were inclined to skepticism, and doubted if there were other worlds or intelligent beings save our earth and its tenants, while they contended if Anselmo did cease to live that day his fiery spirit should be extinguished like a lamp blown out; if not it would be a mistake, for he would be a terror to any one who might be his neighbor in other worlds some thousands of years hence.

Night fell at last; the lights were all put out save in the sick boy's tent, and then their fears really grew overmastering. They were afraid to open their eyes lest some vision not wholesome for mortals to behold might greet them. Stories of the supernatural, death warnings, and apparitions, had been discussed in broad daylight. Now they came to mind with a vividness painfully distinct, but sleep was too powerful for them, and one by one they dropped off without anything more alarming than their own fancies to disturb them. They did not waken until they heard the birds in the trees overhead trilling their ecstasies and on opening their eyes found that the sun was throwing glints here and there amid the shadows of the foliage.

The first question was for Anselmo, but they were alone in the tent and were equally ignorant of his condition. Dandy was the first dressed and he sped across to the tent where the sick boy lay, his heart beating fast with anxiety. Gabe stood at the door looking intently at the river that was rippling under the fresh breeze. He glanced calmly down at Dandy, who was gasping out his inquiries, and only said:

"He is going to live."

Dandy had grown used to the Indian's laconic answers, and without asking further particulars, he hastened back with the good news. A muffled sound came back from the other tent. Gabe smiled, for he knew it was the cheer that had greeted Dandy's announcement.

It was astonishing with what zest the boys resumed their interrupted avocations. Even the daily lessons seemed to be enjoyed, while it mattered little to them whether the trout responded to their enticements of worm and fly, since they chatted right along with each other and planned how generous they were going to be with Anselmo when he was with them once more. They were ignorant of the ravages severe sickness makes, and fancied that in a few days he would be able to take his place among them.

The young men had been watching the case critically, and were inclined to question the wisdom of submitting it entirely to an untutored Indian. There were in the party two young men, medical students from Boston. Their training taught them that the case from the first was very serious. They watched the gathering of herbs and roots and the processes through which they were put, as well as the altogether original treatment of the patient, and had a strong interest in watching the development of the disease.

When they saw the triumph of these simple remedies over disease they were generous enough to acknowledge their admiration of the Indian's skill, and admitted to Alan the wisdom of his decision, as well as their belief in other curative measures than those taught in the schools. Toward the crisis Gabe had scarcely left the sick boy, while Alan noticed on his face the pre-occupied, intense look that he had seen in times of danger, when they were shooting the rapids or facing a sudden squall on the river.

CHAPTER XIII

HOME AGAIN

THE summer under the trees had become a memory only, the tents were folded, and the canoes turned toward civilization as soon as Anselmo was able to be moved.

To say that there was regret at leaving the green, quiet places under the trees, the shady pools along the river banks, which the trout had haunted undisturbed for ages, would only mildly express the sentiments of each lad. There had not been a single case of homesickness since the steamer sailed out of Boston harbor, until that last evening under the trees, as they sat talking of the past and future, there were some very acute cases; but it was the home they were leaving, and not the tainted abodes whither they were going, that caused the general depression.

Anselmo was able now to sit up with the boys for an hour at a time, listening to the tales of their exploits while he was sick. Nearly all of them had some hair-breadth escape from drowning or from beasts of prey to relate, but as much of the danger existed only in their imaginations, they were mutually forbearing in their criticisms.

Anselmo surprised them by his gentleness as he listened to the apocryphal experiences of his comrades. He did not once hint that they had developed an alarming gift for lying during his sickness. They remarked confidentially with each other on this amazing change, speculating about its cause and if it did not portend some such disaster as death, or another spell of sickness.

Dandy kept his own counsel; he had been taken farther into Anselmo's confidence in the long hours, when he alone of all the boys had been allowed to sit with the sick lad. He believed that Anselmo, notwithstanding his illness, had found something better than anything the others had gained that summer, to take back with him to the troubled life from which he had enjoyed a brief respite.

The improvement in deportment was not confined alone to Anselmo. On their homeward journey in the steamer, the same in which they had come, the crew remembered the youthful voyagers very distinctly, and were quite as much impressed with the change as the lads themselves. It was not in morals and deportment alone, but they had developed healthfully; the rosy, sunburned cheeks, and well-rounded forms proved that there had been an all-around development. While they waited in St. John's for the steamer, the young men had taken considerable pride to get their youthful squires new suits of clothes. The thirteen lads walked on board the steamer, that September day, with a sense of exhilaration that only youth well satisfied with things in general could feel.

As they steamed down the harbor, each individual among them felt that his personal appearance was the special object for admiration, and they were so busy thinking about themselves, they failed to notice particularly the splendid view of cliff and harbor. Each young man regarded his own rosy-faced boy with a gratified sense of ownership. Although few of them acknowledged it, most of the young men knew that the summer had been, on the whole, the very best in their lives. Yet the expense had been a mere bagatelle compared with what such summers usually cost their parents or guardians. They had found that helping others, being taken out of self, and coming in such close contact with cramped lives, to whom even the simple delights of nature meant so much, had done them more good than a lifetime at Long Branch or Saratoga.

By the time they had touched the wharf, and the city sights on Commercial Street greeted them, Anselmo was nearly as strong as ever; but Frank Blake, whose special property he had been during the summer, had concluded to try for a little longer what pure food and air would do for his charge. His father had a summer residence among the boulders on the Gloucester coast, within easy distance of Mother Ann's rugged profile, and thither he intended taking the lad for a few more weeks. To the surprise of his comrades, Anselmo was eager to visit the single room in an alley where his parents burrowed. Mr. Blake, to the surprise of his comrades, offered to accompany him to Providence, as he wished to catch a glimpse of what the world provides for some of its inhabitants.

After reaching Providence, the good-byes of the young men who remained were spoken lingeringly, Alan staying to the last. When he was alone with the twelve remaining boys, he had a proposition to make that lifted the cloud that had been gathering on a dozen different faces. After a couple of days spent with their friends at home, they were all to meet him at the railway station, at a certain hour, to go with him to Deeplawn for a week, where he promised they should have a chance to get acquainted with the country, as the labor of man had modified its primal conditions.

Some of the boys knew what to expect; others were as ignorant of farm life as the native Fijian. They said good-bye to him, and went quite contentedly now on their way homeward. Those among them who had been fortunate enough to have been favored by the Fresh Air Fund, endeavored, to the best of their ability, to describe their impressions of farm life, but their experiences were so conflicting, and at the best, so limited, that only a hazy idea could be gathered from all put together.

"You can't just know what it's like till you get there," Bob White assured them. "The cows are drove in from the pastures at night, and their breath smells sweeter than scent. One of them'll give a big bucket of milk, and they take it into a milk room that's built over a brook, and they run it through a sieve, and after that it's ready for you to drink all you want."

Dandy smacked his lips as he thought of those possible evening draughts.

"Milking time's only one of the good things," Mike said, loftily. "There's horses and colts and the fowls—all sorts of gabblin' critters they are, too. And such vittels! Arnold's ain't a circumstance to it. The missus laughed when I asked her if she put hartshorn in her cooking to make it light, same as they do here."

"Does she?" one of them asked, anxiously.

"I guess not! Country people has other things besides pisen stuff to make their cakes look well, real butter and eggs, and things like them."

"I wish there was more country and less city, so's we could all be among the cows and green things. How bad things smell here, anyway!" Jacob Molensky drew his breath uncertainly. There were surely very different odors in the stuffy court which they were just entering, than upon the breezy uplands of those vast Newfoundland solitudes.

"Injuns ain't to be as much pitied as us folks what lives here. They've got plenty of room, and if their camps is small, they've all out doors to walk 'round in, besides fishin' and gunnin'," Mike said, as he turned up a rickety flight of stairs that led to the garret where his parents and some half-dozen children made what shift they could in two rooms under the eaves. The building was high, the odors increasingly unwholesome as they ascended. Every one of the boys had asked to accompany Mike as he was the first one to reach home, in order to witness his welcome, or help to protect him in case his parents were in liquor, which was their usual condition when funds would permit.

"Say, boys! let us start off somewheres in the country, and get ourselves places. We can't stay here after knowin' what good things there are." Mike's face looked the picture of despair as he spoke.

"I'll go with you wherever ye likes," was the willing response from several of the boys.

Alan was speculating that day as he glanced through the car windows at wholesome-looking farmsteads, nestling amid meadows and quiet gardens, if it were really a kindness to these poor waifs to give them glimpses of a better life, and then turn them adrift again. If he could have followed them to Mike's abode he would have felt more deeply for them than ever.

They halted at the door. Jacob glanced around at the dismal scene. "I'll go with ye," he said valiantly. "We'd not be tramps anyway, for we'd be lookin' for work."

"I won't stay here long," Mike said, as the discordant cries of the children, mingled with oaths uttered by a woman's shrill voice greeted their ears. "I'd sooner be a tramp or dead." This was certainly a very unnatural remark for a boy, but if one could actually see the place he called home, the woman he called mother, he might not be surprised.

"It's no use waitin' out here. We might as well go in," one of them said impatiently.

Mike pushed open the door, and such a scene of desolation met their view that even these boys, accustomed to such scenes, turned away in disgust. The father lay, a drunken heap, in the corner; the mother only half-satisfied with the portion falling to her share, was dealing blows among her children, to guilty and innocent alike. Flies were in possession of the puny, starving infant and the bloated man. Mike stood still and looked around. His mother's attention was drawn to the door and seeing Mike, her rage suddenly turned to maudlin affection. She attempted to clasp him in her arms but he adroitly eluded her embrace and left poor Dandy to take the violent hug that made him fairly groan.

"It's me you're kissing, ma'am, and not your own boy," he panted, trying with all his might to disentangle himself from the grimy arms.

"It's no differ, for ye're a luv ov a b'y; and what a foine, dacent crowd ye be!" She still steadied herself on Dandy, looking sweetly around on the twelve pairs of staring eyes.

"I'd scursely known wan av yez! sich clothes—ye looks, ivery wan av ye, loik young gentlemen. Now ye've surely got somethin' in yer pockets; Michael, darlint, jist run to the corner wid the bottle, and get me somethin' to drink yer healths in. Sorra a bite have I got in the house the day, or sup ayther, or I'd stand treat meself."

She staggered to the table and got the bottle.

"I have no money to buy whisky with. If I had I'd get vittels for these hungry young ones," he said, angrily.

"Whist now, or ye'll be wakin' him; and me b'y ye can run away and trade off them foine shoes ye've got on ye. B'ys are better runnin' barefut this hot weather, anyway—or the bundle in yer hand, ye can take that."

She made a surge toward him to get possession of the bundle but he passed it to Dandy.

"Take this and go home all of you. If she is drunk she is my mother," he said, with crimson face.

"Who says I'm drunk?" she screamed, and made a plunge at the nearest boy, but he dodged, and for a few seconds there was a scramble to see who would be first out of the door. Mike held his mother. She was wild now with anger and greed. That precious bundle disappearing through the door might mean a good many drinks; but Mike had developed in muscle as well as flesh during the last few weeks, and she felt herself powerless to move, while he clutched her so tightly.

"Would ye see your own mother robbed?" she screamed.

"I'm not going to see meself robbed any longer," was the cool reply, as he loosened his grasp and backed carefully out of the room.

"It's a mean home-coming sure enough," he muttered as he picked his way down the creaking stairs, at the same time paying scant heed to the frantic remonstrances of his mother.

"I've picked up many a supper before now, and I can do the same again, but it comes harder after the feastin' I've had," he soliloquized. "Market waste won't taste very good after the vittels I've been havin'." He was soon standing over a barrel of garbage outside one of the markets. He managed to fish out some partly decayed fruit and a carrot or two, and with this he had to be satisfied. The evening fortunately was clear, and with his stout suit of clothes he could be very comfortable curled under a tree in one of the squares, where the grass, though it was clipped provokingly short, was yet softer to lie on than the wooden seats.

"Blest if I don't have something softer than this for poor b'ys when I'm an alderman!" He spoke feelingly, wishing meanwhile that some of those great stone buildings, for the most of the time unoccupied, could have some of their empty spaces fitted up with hammocks or cots for just such roofless waifs as he to creep into. He slept soundly, notwithstanding his hard bed and unsheltered head, waking in the morning with an appetite too that some of the rich men sleeping hard by would have given a good many dollars to possess—so well-balanced are our human allotments.

He arose, and washing his face at one of the fountains, proceeded down town to do his share of disseminating the history of the world for that day. His face was familiar at the "Journal" office, for he was one of their most enterprising salesmen, and he felt certain his credit would be good enough to start him once more in business. He was the earliest customer on the ground, and was able to explain matters so satisfactorily that a good bundle was entrusted to him, when he started out feeling quite sure of a breakfast and some capital besides for setting up in business. Before nine o'clock his stock of papers was exhausted, he had settled his account at the office, and was strengthened by a breakfast that made full amends for the shortage of supplies the preceding evening. He went then in search of Dandy and his bundle of clothes.

He must have had a thrifty ancestor somewhere in those remote Irish bogs, who had bequeathed to him the faculty of self-help and economy—not a trifling capital for any boy to begin the world with. Love of kindred, that mysterious instinct we find in all sorts and conditions of men, and which often surprises while it charms us and strengthens our faith in the ultimate uplifting of human nature, was fully developed in Mike. He lingered at the entrance to their court, hoping to get a glimpse of some member of his family, but in vain, so he passed on to the Dingwells'.

When he entered the tidy room he found Dandy seated in a rocking-chair, looking somewhat fatigued, for his mother and sisters had kept him steadily talking, with only imperative interruptions for food and sleep. There was a sudden lifting of countenance when he saw Mike, and he remarked, plaintively:

"I am so glad you have come, for my tongue is just tired out. Won't you tell them about our good times for a spell while I am resting?"

"I'd not mind talking if I'd had such a home-coming as this," Mike said, lugubriously.

He looked at the gentle, pale-faced mother in tidy gown, the neat little girls who were working as industriously as their mother, the brightly papered room with not a speck of dirt visible, and the cooking-stove, whereon was simmering what promised to be a most delectable dinner. Surely, he thought, any boy in his circumstances was justified in envying Dandy his privileges. After he had made inquiries about his bundle, Mike took up the interrupted account of their journeyings which in Mike's rhetorical style of telling, seemed quite another story to the interested listeners.

The work lay idle in the little girls' fingers, and, indeed, very often Mrs. Dingwell's needle was held suspended, while she listened spellbound to Mike's account of their marvelous escapes and surprising experiences. When he came at last to Anselmo's unexpected bath and subsequent illness, the tears flowed freely from the mother's eyes, as she thought, what if it had been her own boy? The morning sped so quickly and Mike found himself so satisfied with his audience, that they were all surprised when they discovered it was nearly dinner time. The Dingwells were seldom too poor to share their dinner with a friend, and to-day they were in a position to feel proud to extend an invitation since, in honor of Dandy's home-coming, a most unusual dinner was in course of preparation.

Mike could easily find space for a dinner, although he had planned to fast until evening in order to get some funds ahead. What a happy feast it was! A real home-made dinner, the like of which Mike had never tasted at home. They had a bit of shank so judiciously stewed it tasted better than an ill-cooked sirloin. Added to this they had onions and parsnips, cabbage and yellow turnips—a genuine Irish stew, with dumplings light as a feather. Then there was a dessert of bananas and bread and milk—a very expensive feast for that household, but they did not have such reunions very often.

Dandy now was so plump and strong and well-clad, he could go out in all weathers to sell his papers. Besides, he had grown to be quite a favorite with many of the newsboys, his companions through the summer, so his business relations on the street would be far more satisfactory than heretofore. Altogether it was a red-letter day in the Dingwell family, one they would all remember, no matter what changes for the better might take place in their circumstances. After this the mother's heart did not grow heavy with dread every time the troublesome cough compelled her to lay aside her work, for if God should, before very long, take her to himself, her children would not be utterly friendless. They would, also, soon be capable of looking after themselves.

It seemed like the happy days of the past, when she was a girl at home, "away down East." Her father was a farmer, and all these descriptions of the country were as familiar to her as the faces of her children. After dinner they lingered around the table, and the boys talked about their future quite like grown men. They had become so enamored with country life that they had lost all relish for the crowded thoroughfares and the daily shouting the fresh editions of the world's crimes and politics.

They were planning how they would look for situations in the country whither, in due time, they would get their respective families removed from the grime and noise of the city. Mike assured them there were plenty of places strewn over the Union where not a drop of liquor was within walking distance.

"Wouldn't that be the place to take your folks?" Dandy said, eagerly.

"Yes, and I'll get there yet," Mike said, with a very determined air. "Wouldn't it be fine if we'd get places near each other?"

"I dare say we might if we tried," Dandy answered, evasively. He could not truthfully respond to Mike's question in the affirmative, for Mike's parents and brothers and sisters did not seem to him desirable neighbors, by any means.

CHAPTER XIV

AT DEEPLAWN

THE hour came at last when the boys were to go to Deeplawn. They met at the station an hour earlier than the time appointed, so afraid were they that Alan might get away without them.

He came some fifteen minutes before the time himself, as he had the tickets to buy for the twelve of them, and fruit and luncheon to secure as well, for he knew some of them, if not all, would have very good appetites before their arrival. They were a very bright-faced party of boys, although some of them had very irregular features, and would not be considered good-looking by the least critical observer; but joy is certainly a beautifier, and they had that cosmetic in an unlimited degree. They ate their luncheon, cracked nuts and jokes together, and amused themselves so well, that they scarcely knew where the time had gone when they reached their station. Filing out on the platform they found carriages waiting to take them to Deeplawn, in as much style as if they had been university students instead of bootblacks and newsboys. There were cottages along the way for a mile and more, which Alan told them belonged to his estate and were the homes of the farm hands and their families.

"My, but they're foine places to be a livin' in!" one of the lads said, admiringly; a remark every other boy acquiesced in heartily. When they entered the avenue, bordered with oak and chestnut trees, they gazed about in amazement. The pillared gateway, and the long vistas through the trees, whence could be caught glimpses of smooth meadows, looked better even than the forest aisles in Newfoundland. As they drove along, gay flower-beds, arbors, and the ripple of water from the fountains, charmed them.

"It's curious, when God loves us all alike, he gives so much more to some than others," Billy Spencer, a native-born American, said, discontentedly.

"I guess there's a screw loose in our forbears. The Lord can't pervide the hull of us first-class parents; there ain't enough to go round," a meek lad, whose forbears had various screws loose, said, while he cast an admiring glance around, and then added: "We wouldn't be ourselves if somebody else had been our father and mother."

"I'd not care a cent who my father was, if he'd only leave me a place like this," Jacob Molensky said, with charming indifference to the relationship that had done little more for him than to provide a body, mostly in a craving condition.

"I wish't our folks'd all been the same kind 's Mr. Rivers'. Anyway I mean to give my boys and girls a better start nor I've had," another strong-faced boy said, with decision.

"It's looking a long way ahead, don't you think, to make plans for your children?" Dandy timidly inquired.

"I'll begin early so's to be ready for 'em."

When the boys reached the house and saw the stately proportions of their temporary home, they were considerably abashed.

"Why, it's handsomer than them swell houses on the East Side. Jest see them great posts with ridges on 'em; what lots of kindlin's they'd make!" Mike could admire and appreciate the value of the fluted columns, but could not elegantly express his views.

They went lingeringly up the steps, visions of a cool reception from the women of the household flitting before them.

"I wonder 'll the missus be willin' for us crowd of gaffers to come among all this finery?" Mike whispered, while he reflected on his own mother's possible wrath at such an intrusion.

"Say, Mr. Rivers, 'll your wife, or whatever woman looks after things here, be willin' for us fellers to come onto these good carpets?" Billy Spencer asked, anxiously.

"I have no one to find fault with me, except the very good woman whom I hire to superintend my house; but I shall expect you lads to behave like young gentlemen. You can romp and have all the fun you like out of doors, and I have had the gymnasium refitted for you in case of rain. You can read any of the books in the library, look at the pictures, and have just the same privileges that grown-up guests would have; but I shall expect you to behave with the same propriety in the house as they would."

Mike now acted as spokesman.

"We'll do everything we can to plase ye, sor; but now and then we may forgit—our manners have never been polished—so you'll plase to remember if we misbehaves, it'll be for want of knowin' better, won't it, b'ys?" He appealed to the others, who were standing looking already very much like culprits.

"Yes, it will," came with heartiness from them all.

"Now this is satisfactorily settled, I will show you where you are to sleep. It is the custom, generally, after a day's traveling to wash and brush one's self a little. My housekeeper suggested fitting up what used to be the schoolroom for this. You can splash there to your heart's content."

"We'd jest as soon wash ourselves outdoors in some clean puddle, if it w'd save the woman trouble," Mike said, deferentially.

He felt a growing desire to get out in the open air, and thus escape the conventionalities and intricacies of modern civilization; but Alan took no notice of his modest offer as he led the way up a broad flight of stairs, over carpets that muffled every footfall. He halted at another staircase at the back of the passage and pointing to it, said:

"Mrs. Dixon, the housekeeper, would like you to use this stairway. She has lifted the carpet so that if your shoes should be muddy, the stains can easily be washed out."

"We'll be sure to remember," Mike promised again for them all.

Alan opened a door near by that led into a large room, fitted up with beds and dressing tables.

"Some of you will occupy this room," he said, "and the others will take the room beyond. They are fitted up alike and you can make your own selection of beds. When you get older, I'm sure Mrs. Dixon will have no objection to offering the best guest chambers in the house to you, but just now she is inexorable."

The boys stood in groups, surveying the suite of rooms appropriated to their use—the white beds, with the strips of carpet, the pictures, and soft, white draperies at the windows, looped back with pink ribbons.

"Why, it's better 'n a hospital!" was the first awestruck ejaculation.

Hospitals, hitherto, had been their ideal of comfort in the matter of beds, but their admiration for these had not been unmixed with terror, because of the pain they had experienced in those places themselves, or witnessed in their friends.

"I should say it was," Mike said, with a long-drawn sigh of delight. To stretch out on one of those luxurious beds, and then to waken in the morning with leisure to lie, and through those drawn curtains look over the fresh country, would be a new and altogether beautiful experience.

"I am glad you are satisfied with your quarters," Alan said, quite relieved, "and now I will show you our grounds where you can go and come at pleasure." He pointed through the window to the kitchen-garden, just now a profusion of all sorts of vegetables, and beyond that to the orchard, with the meadows and uplands, where herds of cattle and horses were grazing.

"And can we go just where we likes, over all those places?" Mike asked.

"Yes, only you must be careful not to injure anything. On this side you will see the flower gardens. Deeplawn has been noted for its flowers for a good many years. The gardener will give you permission to go through that at any time, I am sure."

The boys thought the fruit orchard would be the favorite pleasure ground. Alan left them then, after he had told them when they were to come down to dinner. They washed and scoured face and hands with the small white brushes profusely supplied, not knowing exactly for what purpose they were provided, but anxious not only to present a clean front at the dinner table, but also to show their appreciation of the useful articles furnished.

Mike was diligently scouring his neck when Dandy came from the window, where he had been lingering by himself for the double purpose of giving the older boys the first chance at the basins, and of looking at the beautiful view.

"Blest if we know what these little things is for; is it to clane out the wrinkles do ye think?" Mike suspended his scrubbing and held the brush aloft for Dandy's inspection, his face and neck a brilliant hue from its vigorous application.

"Why, they are to clean the teeth with."

"Oh!" Mike's ejaculation expressed relief not unmixed with contempt.

"If they'll give us plenty to ate we'll clane our teeth without these bristles. What fandangles the quality do be havin'! No wonder they mostly has a tired look rememberin' av all their etceterys," but Mike proceeded forthwith to scour a set of milk-white teeth that nature hitherto had attended with better than a dentist's care.

"It's a decline I'll be after fallin' into if I keep on spittin blood like that," he said, laying the brush aside.

"You must not rub so hard," Dandy suggested.

"Umph! I guess that rubbin' 'll do till I'm an old man."

Their toilets were completed long before the dinner bell rang, but the time did not hang heavily on their hands, for there were the pictures that hung on their wall to be examined and those other pictures framed by the windows, orchards laden with fruit, huge trees with splendid opportunities for climbing and with no gruff policemen standing guard.

"Boys, I wish this week 'ud last till we was men growed. Won't it be hard to go back to them courts and alleys?" Mike said, solemnly.

The bell rang and no one waited to reply. They went trooping downstairs rather uncertainly, but to their relief found a maid waiting for them. She led the way into a large dining room, where a table was laid with an elegance that added considerably to their embarrassment. Alan was seated at one end, an elderly lady in a black silk gown and lace cap at the other.

"Mrs. Dixon, these are our young friends. You will learn their names by degrees, but I will introduce the two lads who sit nearest you," and he forthwith presented Dandy and Jacob Molensky.

Mrs. Dixon bowed politely, but at the same time glanced anxiously down each side of the long table.

She had been mistress in that house since Alan was a baby, and felt an owner's pride in the handsome appointments of the dinner table. These boys would be sure to spill tea and gravies on the damask cloth, while the dainty glass and china would not be safe in their unaccustomed fingers; but Alan said they must come to the table with him, and she was too loyal to let him sit down to anything inferior. She was not prepared for the reverent attitude of each individual among them while grace was said. Her own eyes were the only pair unclosed, which was somewhat reassuring. Although the dinner disappeared with uncommon celerity there was no upsetting or smashing of dishes. If she could have realized what a revelation that dinner was to those boys, what a civilizing effect it had on their uncultured natures, she would have examined the no longer spotless table napery with more equanimity.

They restrained their feelings until they were well out of sight of the house; then there was a sudden effervescence of spirits. Alan smiled as he stood on the doorstep, while the mingled whoops and shrieks of joyous merriment came floating on the perfumed air. He thought how he would have enjoyed this merry crowd a few years ago, then said to himself:

"I enjoy it more now than I would have done then. I understand better what it means for them."

The boys had been let loose in the orchard with the single request not to break the limbs. What a glimpse it was of the abundance our world has of good things for man, those loaded limbs of apple, peach, pear, and plum trees! They had eaten all they wanted at dinner, but digestion was rapid with them, and those fruit trees were enough to tempt the most delicate appetite. There was probably a bushel less fruit growing on the trees when the twelve boys walked leisurely toward the house in the late afternoon. Alan dispatched them early to bed. He wanted them to have the very best of everything during that brief week, and the morning hours he considered the best time for them to examine into nature's wonderful provisions for man's needs.

They needed no bells to waken them. The more alert among their number were up and away at sunrise exploring the hills and pasture lands, where colts of every size were disporting, with staid brood mares and high-stepping horses. What possible use could be made of two-score horses was more than Mike could understand. He was afraid there was unnecessary waste in the matter, and he resolved to give some judicious advice. After breakfast he introduced the subject to Alan.

"It seems to me, sor, ye've a lot more horses than are a profit to ye." He always fell into his richest brogue when excited.

"Why, Mike, our horses are the best investment we have. Some of those colts clear me a thousand dollars. I hope you boys will be careful not to interfere with them, not even to lay a hand on them. They are easily blemished, and a blemish on some of them would cost me as much as my summer's trip, with your expenses into the bargain."

"Ye don't say so!" Mike was amazed. "Why, I was plannin' to have a ride on the back av wan av them little fellers; they looked mighty enticin'."

Mrs. Dixon, who was present, could hold her peace no longer:

"If you ever do such a thing, we shall send you home that very day."

Alan smiled at her fears.

"You need not be anxious, these boys can be trusted, every one of them."

She did not fail to notice the glad look that came into every face, and felt assured that not a boy among them would molest the poorest-looking nag in the pasture. After breakfast Alan took them to another pasture, where there were several large-limbed horses quietly feeding. At the sound of his voice they came crowding to the gate, when he took a lump of sugar from his pocket for each, then catching two of them, he let Mike mount one and Dandy the other. Mike glanced down on the other boys triumphantly, Dandy, with a countenance that plainly expressed his willingness to change positions with any boy who wished. The horse walked so soberly down the lane he gradually lost his fears, and when he came safely through the meadow gate he began to feel as if he and the horse were fairly well adapted to each other.

Alan showed the boys how to harness and put the horses into a farm wagon. Then they all climbed into the wagon, and he let them take turns driving on the way to a distant field, where the harvesters were at work gathering in some late grain. An exciting time they had, building the loads, driving the horses to the huge stacks and unloading. They were surprised when the dinner-horns sounded from the farmhouses down in the lower fields. Alan promised to let them come again after dinner. He was in his shirt sleeves, working as diligently as any man there.

" Do you like to work ? " Dandy asked, as they rode home together.

" Yes, sometimes I think it would be the happiest lot to work a snug little farm, and to have nothing else, only a happy home where some one would always be glad to see me come in."

"I should think you might easily have that," Dandy suggested.

"God gives other duties and a wider sphere to some of us. In whatever state we are we should be content, and I try to be."

"I don't know of any one in all the world who has as much as you, but maybe the Lord made us so we never could be quite contented."

"Who told you that, Dandy?"

"I don't know if any one did. You see one thinks things themselves, sometimes."

"The subject of divine discontent is rather a deep one for a lad like you."

"I never remember thinking anything like that, sir," Dandy said, humbly. He did not wish to get credit for brighter thoughts than he could honestly claim.

On their way home Alan suggested to the boys that there might be other amusements they would enjoy more than working in the harvest field, but they assured him nothing could be better. The harvesters enjoyed the fun, and also enjoyed having the young master working like one of themselves. The moon was climbing above the horizon when they left the harvest field. As they curled up, tired but very happy, on a bundle of straw in the creaking wain, they fell to planning how they would become farmers at once. For a few months they would hire out until they could get a bit of land upon which to build some sort of habitation, where they would settle their parents.

As Alan listened to their low-spoken confidences on that evening ride, with the moon casting long shadows across their path, he began to make plans in their behalf of which they were little conscious. He determined that what had been one summer's pastime should continue through future years as a serious, earnest effort. He would still continue the course of study mapped out and then enter some pursuit to which he might be called, but this work should always have a share in his time. He had penetrated quite far into his future by the time the boys clambered down at the barnyard gate and watched the unharnessing of the horses.

The next day Mr. Dolliver arrived. At dinner he beamed benevolently on the double row of youthful faces. Mike was particularly pleased with the old man, while the natural reverence he felt for the clergy, with the cavalier manner in which his friendly overtures had been received hitherto, made him all the more open to the kindly ways of the venerable minister. Mike had, in a day or two, become such an expert driver that Alan let him take the minister for his drives, and these Mike found very interesting. He was surprised at the extent of Mr. Dolliver's knowledge of the people for miles around, and such interesting stories as he could tell about what had happened there during the last forty years—the joys and the tragedies; for there were the latter, as must always be the case wherever there are human beings. Mike was particularly impressed with Mr. Dolliver's prayers. He used to pray so earnestly that they might grow up to be good men and be kept from the evil influences that surrounded them, that at many a prayer time Mike's eyes would fill with tears and he would have hard work to conceal them.

Mrs. Dixon encouraged them to go picnicking nearly every day, and she and the maids compounded good things for the occasion with great cheerfulness. It was a relief to get the boys as far away as possible. After the long stillness to which she had grown accustomed, the sudden invasion of a dozen boys was very trying to her nerves. Mike proving the best driver, he was always entrusted with one of the wagon loads of boys, while Alan led the way with the rest.

One day their drive was to be extended beyond the usual length, and both dinner and supper had to be provided, since they would reach home only at bedtime. They started in the early morning. The objective point of the expedition was a lake in the woods where there were some fine trout. The fishing privilege belonged to Alan, but the land adjacent was owned by others.

Mrs. Dixon and the maids had packed the hamper of provisions the preceding evening. When it was being placed in the wagons the boys concluded there would be enough to last several days, forgetting what appetites they always had in the woods.

The sun was beginning to grow hot when they turned off into the welcome shade of the forest track, where the limbs sometimes brushed their faces, while far overhead stray bits of sunshine could be caught through the leafy spaces. They found the lake hidden in a perfect bower of green. Great hard-wood trees guarded its shores and hung reflected in its bosom. Everything was so quiet the boys for a while hushed their laughter and shouts, and stood with the sober propriety of genuine anglers, rod in hand, waiting for the fish to bite.

The fishing, however, was not like that in Newfoundland. The trout were wary and only at long intervals did one take the hook, but this was enough to keep the lads interested, and there was also a witchery in the surrounding scenery, which had been fashioned by nature in one of her gentlest moods. The catch for that day, though, consisted principally of the more youthful members of the trout family.

For any who should come to make a prolonged stay at the lake, there was a log cabin and fireplace. The boys examined the furnishings of the primitive abode, which went by the name of Camp Content, with an eagerness that made Alan think they were truly in earnest about migrating to the country.

"Isn't it jolly here?" Mike said, as he finished his survey and came to the fireplace where Alan was superintending the preparation for dinner. "Could a body come here and settle on the land without paying for it?" he asked, anxiously.

"They might be turned off by the owners."

Alan's reply was absently given; the trout were simmering in the pan, and he was not an expert cook. Indeed, it required his undivided attention to look after the frying-pan alone. He had many a time visited his laborers' cottages, and knew much more than average young men of his class respecting the manner of living among working people; and to-day as he was wrestling with the problem of trout cooking, he was reflecting with considerable admiration on the deft way housewives can superintend the preparation of half a dozen different dishes, and perhaps at the same time hush a crying baby. Mike waited until the trout were turned and then renewed the conversation.

"Would the owners mind if a body settled down here and built a house like this? Sure the place be's jest runnin' to waste."

"Land owners, as a rule, are not in favor of having people settle on their land ; it is often difficult to dislodge them."

"If I'd pay rent they'd not want to get me off?"

"How could you earn money for that, and to feed and clothe yourself besides?"

"Wouldn't the farmers hire me? Wouldn't they be willin' to help a feller get away from our court to where he'd be able to live clane and dacent?"

"I think you will find, somewhere, a green spot in which you may grow up to honest manhood. Maybe that is part of my calling, to help such as you to be tillers of the soil."

Mike's face flushed.

"I'm not manin', sor, for you to do it for me. If you'd hire me to work for you like them other b'ys and men you have, I'd be obliged to ye. Maybe ye'd speak to some other farmer for me."

"The trout are done now, and we will have our dinner before we settle so important a matter as your future."

Mike was very well content with his partial answer. He was a good judge of character and quite observing, and in his past intercourse with Alan he had found fulfillment always far exceeded his promises. When they rose from dinner he lured the boys to the other side of the lake, where they indulged in a luxurious bath, and then began speculating on house building. Even Jacob Molensky reckoned it would be more like living to be on a bit of land in the country with cows and hens to work for him, than to be selling newspapers and starving part of the time in the city.

CHAPTER XV

FARM LABORERS

MIKE'S question led Alan to think very seriously if it might not be possible to get work for the boys who preferred country life, and for their parents as well. He was not, as yet, a political economist, but the overcrowded state of cities generally and the consequent degradation of the poorer classes had caused him a good many perplexed thoughts. But there the matter might have rested with only a few summer holidays for some of the lads, as results.

If he could convey a dozen or so families from those congested districts to the country and get them interested in farm life, it would be something accomplished in the great work of restoring the equilibrium between rural and town life; but more than that, it would revolutionize the lives of those concerned more beneficially than acts of State or entire lecture courses on the subject. Every summer it was necessary to import farm laborers from a distance. In some cases these men were both vicious and incompetent, and wrought more evil among their work-fellows than Mr. Dolliver could overcome in a year. If they could get permanent settlers, with a bit of land of their own to till, to help at such busy seasons, it would be a mutual gain.

He conferred with neighboring landowners on the subject, but, as a rule, they did not encourage such immigration from the cities. They assured him the risk was heavy. They might fall sick on their hands, or turn out idle and vicious, perhaps rob gardens and hen-roosts and commit other depredations that would ultimately lessen the value of land in their vicinity. A few, however, gave a hesitating consent to employ these new importations if Alan chose to incur the expense of settling them near by on his own property.

The season then was far advanced, but there were always jobs to be done, and as the farmers in the valley were a thrifty class of men, there was little idle time with them the year round. Alan resolved to settle his immigrants as far apart as possible, thinking it would be a mutual benefit to them to see as little of each other as might be, while their chances for work would be all the better. He decided to secure first the names of those willing to come to the country, and afterward to see about getting them settled—a very wise plan, as he later on discovered.

The last day of their visit at Deeplawn had come, and a very blue day it was to every one of the boys. Jacob Molensky was a worse socialist than ever, and could hardly forgive Alan for having so much more than his share of worldly goods.

Mike remembered with painful distinctness his home-coming of a fortnight ago, but he was a strong-fibered lad and kept up a cheerful countenance till the last. Mrs. Dixon and the maids, however, watched the procession departing with great satisfaction, having first ascertained that the boys had not abstracted spoons or other valuables, as might reasonably have been expected.

Alan went with them. In order to get the families settled in the country, it would be necessary for him to lose a week or two at the beginning of the term, but a little extra study would soon bring him up with the rest.

On the way he explained his intentions fully to the boys and what would be expected from them in return. Their parents and brothers and sisters, old enough to work, could all get employment of some kind, and if the pay was not very high, neither would their expenses be heavy. Each family would have a separate cottage with a garden, where they might raise all the vegetables for their own use another year. The boys were jubilant, and already held themselves with all the dignity of prospective landowners.

Mike, on the whole, was gifted with the best business ability, so he was deputed to canvass among the families and see how many would be willing to emigrate at once. He had a very busy day, beginning at his own household, and a very discouraging one, for not a single family would listen to his proposals but the widow Dingwell. He presented himself before Alan the following evening looking the picture of despair, for he had the mercurial temperament of the genuine Celt.

"Not a mother's son av 'em 'll come but that poor widdy Dingwell. She's fair foolish at getting out there, she's that glad."

"Your parents, then, won't come?"

"They say not a fut av them 'll go out among the stumps," and Mike became deeply absorbed in the view from the window.

"You can come without them. Some day, after you have earned a good home, you may be able to entice them to come also."

"I mean to go, if you'll have me; but it's the little chaps I'm worritin' about. They'll grow up afore I get a house airned, and be spilt intirely by that time." Mike cleared his throat, but it sounded more like a sob. "It's no use, I can't be stayin' here after the sup I've had av clane air and vittels, and I tould me father so."

"What did your father say?"

"He just swore, that was all; but I'm goin' all the same." Mike spoke with quiet determination, but Alan looked perplexed.

"I cannot take you without your father's consent."

"Every boy av the crowd is goin', and you'd surely not make me stay behind?" The tears stood now unconcealed in Mike's eyes.

"I will have a talk with your father myself."

"Will you please, sor, to come airly, afore he goes to the saloon? You have no idee what sort of folks the Lord's pervided me with. I'll just tell them the night you're comin', and maybe they'll keep straight." Mike's cheeks shone like peonies when he spoke of the parents whom Alan assured him it was his duty to obey.

The following morning the visit was made. As Alan walked along looking for the court where Mike lived, he saw the lad waiting for him.

"They're both sober the morn', and me mother's fixed up considerable for you," he said, with much satisfaction. "It's jest in this way and up that flight of stairs; they look weak like, but they're stronger nor ye'd think." Mike went nimbly up, followed more circumspectly by his friend, for the prospect was not reassuring.

"Ye might jist tuck your watch and chain in your trouser pocket. Sometimes folks gets robbed round here." Mike spoke in a whisper as he paused at the door.

Alan did as he was advised and then pushed boldly in after his guide. Such squalor, such horrible sights and odors as greeted him, he could never forget. Mike's parents were evidently waiting for their visitor, while Alan was equally anxious to proceed to business. He plunged at once into the subject without any circumlocution.

"Will you let Mike come to the country to work with the farmers?"

"Oi jist wull, if yez'll pay for his worruk; but no b'y ov moine 'ill slave for rich folks for nuthin'," said the father.

"His wages for some time will amount to very little, but he will have good food and abundance of it, with warm clothing."

"Do ye mane to say a great b'y like him 'll only get vittels and clothes?" he asked, fiercely.

"He must make the best bargain he can with the farmers, but can't expect to earn much above his own needs at first." Alan spoke firmly, looking the man sternly in the face. Mike interposed:

"Ye'd better let me go with the gentleman, for if ye don't, ye'll be sorry, that's all I've got to say."

"Oi'll tache ye to talk perliter nor that to yer father," he cried, aiming a blow at his first-born, but striking the door instead, which enraged him more than ever.

"I'll fetch the perlice," Mike whispered. "I think ye'd better run, though; they're wickeder than ye'd think."

Alan had no thought of running That blear-eyed pair, with unsteady nerves, would be no match for him; so he held his ground, resolved in any case to get Mike out of such a den.

McQuinn turned fiercely to Alan and hissed:

"Git out of this, ye thafe, comin' betwixt a parent and his child. Oi'll be the death of ye, if ye don't."

"You won't hurt me," Alan said, calmly. "I came here to help your son, not to quarrel with you. Sit down and talk reasonably about the terms you demand."

McQuinn responded with an attempt to strike the alert young fellow, who was watching him keenly, his back set against the door, but the hand was seized, and he was held at arm's length, apparently with the same ease a mother would exercise with a refractory child.

"By the powers, but ye've a foine grip av the fist, so ye have," McQuinn said, admiringly, while he vainly endeavored to extricate himself from Alan's grasp. He found a trial of strength was going to fail him and he was going to change his tactics. If Mike would only keep out of the way there was no knowing what good luck might befall him if this rich young fellow was provided with a watch and pocket-book.

"If ye'll plase to let go me hand, and set down here with me, friendly-like, we'll talk it over paceable." He spoke in a wheedling tone, but Alan liked his manner less than when he was in a rage.

Mrs. McQuinn was edging up with the intention of releasing her spouse. Alan kept his eye steadily on her, but still held her struggling husband.

"Ye'd not be after striking a woman, would ye?" McQuinn asked, uneasily.

"Certainly not; but I may find it necessary to hold her hands to prevent her striking me," was the quiet reply.

Mrs. McQuinn changed her mind, and settled back into a corner; but Alan saw her reaching slyly for a poker near by as he renewed the argument with McQuinn.

"Will you consent now for Mike to come with me?"

"Would ye be expectin' a faycher to part with his b'y jist when he was a help, lettin' a stranger have all the profit of his upraisin'?"

"Mike's upraising has not cost you much, but still he is your son——"

Mrs. McQuinn had again assumed a warlike attitude and was already coming toward him. He saw the poker hid in the fold of her dress, and was beginning to wonder what he was to do with her—if it would be safe to strike McQuinn hard enough to disable him, and yet not seriously injure him, while he dealt with her. Nothing short of force, he now saw, would extricate him from the difficulty, and in case others in the house should hear what was going on and come to share in the melée, it might end more seriously than he cared to think.

"Mrs. McQuinn, if you come one step nearer I shall be obliged to disable your husband while I deal with you."

She paused, looking uncertainly at the man who was holding her husband with such apparent ease, but it was only for an instant and with poker uplifted she was almost ready to strike, when Alan, giving McQuinn a push, seized the poker and threatening them with it, held both at bay. They began to scream. Then there was a scuffling of feet outside, and Alan felt the door behind him violently pushed. He stepped aside, scarcely knowing which was the better part of valor, to stand his ground or beat a hasty retreat poker in hand. Several unkempt creatures came rushing in, ready to join with the McQuinns and share in the plunder, but a sudden hush fell upon them, for other steps were heard, and the blue coats and brass buttons of two stalwart policemen stood in the door, with Mike, Jacob Molensky, and Billy Spencer in the rear.

"What's the rumpus here?" one of the policemen asked.

"There ain't no rumpus. Only this man wants to rob us av our darlin' child."

"I believe it was 'your darlin' child' that sent us here in hot haste to take care of him."

"The young rascal," McQuinn muttered, ending with a dreadful imprecation.

"I advise you to come away with us, they are a hard crowd here," the policeman said, turning to Alan.

"I am anxious first to make some arrangement with them about their son; he is worth saving."

"It's not after his parents he takes then," the policeman said, with a glance of contempt at the miserable pair, who stood regarding them wrathfully.

Mike suddenly came forward.

"You may as well make as good a bargain as you can with Mr. Rivers, daddy, for I'm bound to leave here."

"Ye ungrateful villain!" The father's expression was something fearful as he glared at his offspring.

"Ye'd better not be after making any rash promises, Mr. Rivers. I'll slip away quiet like, and be turnin' up at the farm some foine mornin', when we can plan things by ourselves," whispered Mike into Alan's ear.

"He is your father, Mike. If we could get his consent for you to go, we might, in time, rescue him too."

"It's a gone case, sor," Mike said, hopelessly.

Alan went a few steps nearer to McQuinn and said:

"Your son is determined to leave. Would it not be better for you to still keep a hold on him by giving your consent? I am sure he will share whatever wages he may earn with you, if you part with him kindly."

"What'll ye give me for him?" McQuinn again demanded, seeking something more definite than mere promises.

"I have told you what we will do. Mike himself will repeat the promise."

"Yes, I'll give ye everything I can," Mike said, eagerly.

"If we get you a cottage with a bit of garden and the promise of plenty of work, won't you come with the rest of your family next summer?"

"Oi'll see about it. Get off with ye now," he said, sullenly, bestowing such a look of concentrated rage on his son that the latter quickly went from the room, without receiving any response to his hastily spoken farewell.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM THE DEPTHS

MIKE, with a very exultant expression of countenance, accompanied the rather large party of civilians and police down the creaking stairs. The policemen walked in the rear of the procession with an occasional backward glance to see that no missile was likely to be launched after them.

Mike's exuberance of spirits was really infectious. The other boys who had joined them shared in his pleasure; for were they not also to emigrate, soon or late, to the land of plenty? When they had emerged on the street, the rest scattering and Mike and Alan found themselves alone in the anxious-faced throng that ceaselessly passes to and fro in that quarter, he said, gleefully:

"Isn't it jist foine I've got clear with whole bones! I know them perlicemen, and if me fayther makes trouble bime-by, why we've only got to summons them as witnesses."

Alan thought there was small prospect of their help being required. Persons who have fallen as low as the McQuinns, are as a rule very content to leave the law alone if it does not interfere with them. Mike began to walk less briskly, and at last he asked rather plaintively:

"Will I go right to Deeplawn, or can I have a bite to eat first? I've seen very little vittels, only what I fished out of the market barrels, since I've come to town."

"You shall have your dinner at once," and Alan led the way into a dining room they were nearing. Mike opened wide his eyes with amazement. He certainly did not expect anything so good as this, to be sitting at one of those tables toward which he had scores of times cast longing eyes while selling papers; and to be waited on by those gentlemen with white aprons, who had occasionally put into the hands of hungry newsboys the contents of discarded dinner plates, this was more than he expected for some years to come. The very strangeness and surprising honor of the occasion threatened to dull his appetite, but when he tasted the excellent chicken soup he realized how terribly keen his hunger was, and felt a great wave of sympathy for a fellow-newsboy with whom he was on friendly terms, who was watching him from outside.

"Does a dinner like this cost much?" he asked in a whisper, of Alan, who was busy over his own soup.

"Not very much," was the amused answer.

"When I get rich I'm comin' here every day, and I'll give poor fellers like him over there, all the soup they can swaller. I guess Blinders could eat half a gallon ; he looks awful holler."

Alan looked at the individual indicated by Mike's finger.

"Why is he called Blinders?"

"Don't you see how his ears sets out from his head like the blinders av a horse? I guv him that name my own self, so I did." Mike spoke proudly, as if it were something very clever.

"You would like him to have some dinner to-day, I presume."

"Av course; he'd like it hisself, but he'd not ask to be sot down like this, and maybe in them clothes the waiters would object too; but he could have a sup of soup out beyant there where you hear them dishes a rattlin'."

"How much money do you want?" Alan asked, looking down kindly into the eager, upturned face.

"A quarter 'll buy all the bread and soup he can eat. I know a waiter who has a ter'ble soft heart—us fellers all knows him. I guess he's goin' to be a preacher some day; Dandy said so, and he knows lots about that sort of folks."

Alan laid down the quarter and Mike, by some mysterious gesture, acquainted Blinders with the fact that he too was to be treated, for he immediately stood at the door looking in with eager face.

Mike went at once to interview his favorite waiter, and a moment later, Blinders disappeared behind a screen, and Mike returned to his interrupted dinner with evident self-approval.

"He says he'll pay yer the first thing when he gits on his feet."

Alan did not interrupt Mike to inquire what that obscure phrase meant. The dinner ended, Mike was entrusted with the money to buy his ticket, and Alan proceeded on his way alone. He was passing through one of those mental crises every worker among the lapsed classes is sadly familiar with. Try as he might, what could he accomplish by way of reducing this gigantic mass of human misery? The broad avenues and stately buildings near could give no solution to the question.

He sank into a seat in one of the squares, and surrounded by its beauty there came before him a vision of the thousands of human blossoms in the courts and alleys of the city. Unwashed, hungry babies for whom no one cared, boys and girls facing toward ruin and for the most part only a few weak women's hands stretched out to stay their progress thither—women who forsook their pleasant homes and congenial pursuits and for Christ's sake went down to heal these festering wounds, as far as their feeble hands could do it. Was it true that corporations have souls only for inanimate things, caring nothing for humanity? These flowers about him were certainly very beautiful, and rested tired eyes no doubt; but an untimely frost would soon reduce them to unsightly stalks, and their beauty would then be only a fading memory.

He got up, walked to the street, and hailed a car. One thing at a time must be done. The thing awaiting him just then was the honorable completion of his college course. Some day he might be able to infuse a more brotherly spirit into municipal organizations, which now did not seem to reckon the future men and women of the commonwealth at as high a value as tulip or hyacinth bulbs.

A few weeks later there came an enthusiastic letter from Mike, one of the most gratifying messages the daily mail brought to Alan for many a day. Mike had reconnoitered among the farmers himself, the business capacity developed in the streets standing him in good stead in his negotiations. He had no idea of being a mere hanger-on upon Alan's bounty. To be transported to Deeplawn and lodged and fed so royally while he was settling himself was all he asked, and for this he expressed a boundless gratitude in the blotted, misspelled epistle he sent to his benefactor.

He described his home with great minuteness.

It was a large, old-fashioned farmhouse whose furnishings were little altered from the fashions of half a century before, some of the articles still in use dating back to old colonial times.

The brass andirons in the prim parlor, with the stiff chairs and spindle-legged tables that had been mute witnesses of the triumphs of the Revolution, awakened in Mike an amazed admiration. In his paternal home the few household articles that served their daily needs had been changed since his recollection more times than he could count. How often had he watched their last stick of furniture on its way to the pawnshop, with nothing left behind but four mildewed walls and the children! He used to think it a pity that children were of so little value that thirsty parents could not exchange them for a glass of whisky.

Alan smiled as he read Mike's incoherent description of the farmhouse and its inmates. The family were all grown and most of them settled in homes of their own, but for those still remaining the lad had formed a very high regard. They always had such abundance of good food, and were on such friendly terms with each other and all the world, he was kept in a state of perpetual wonderment.

"I'd never thought folks could get on so quiet like," he wrote, ecstatically. "I've never heard an oath or ugly word from one of 'em; most like it's the prayers, for they do be havin' them twice a day on their knees, and every time they sets down to eat, and they makes fresh prayers every mornin' and night. They've tuck me to church, too, and it was as aisy as anythin' to do like them. The preacher one Sunday made some av 'em cry. It was a revival they wor havin', and he told them a lot about their sins and how good the Lord were to 'em. Blest if I didn't cry meself, for I never heard tell about it rightly afore, and when the preacher asked anybody who wanted to forsake the devil and take the Lord for their Master to stand up, why I jist jumped right up, of course, and said, 'Please, sir, it's him I'm wantin' to belong to.' If my folks warn't proud then you niver did see, and I declare if they don't be callin' of me brother Michael in the meetin's now. They do be powerful glad here to get hold of the likes of me, and they've got me fast enough, I tell you."

When the letter was finished Alan folded it away with a feeling that the time of reaping had begun. It was the first real encouragement he had met in his rescue attempts, and although feeling that his life-work had not really begun, he was eager to be doing what he could each returning day. A little later he received a letter from the Dingwells. They were now settled in one of the small cottages at Deeplawn. Mrs.

Dixon had taken them under her care, and the consequence was that matters for them were progressing most satisfactorily. The children were working when occasion offered, and for the rest of the time were at school. Dandy was able to do light work for the farmers, while Mrs. Dingwell and the little girls were very useful with the needle among the overworked farmers' wives. The other lads had gravitated to the city again, but were all promising to become farmers later on.

Alan had not yet discovered what his own work in life was to be; in fact, it was becoming an increasing perplexity. To overlook the workmen at Deeplawn scarcely seemed a sufficient career. He could not be blind to the fact that his endowments of intellect were more than the average. With an ease that was admired by fellow-students and professors alike, he took some of the first honors of his class. It appeared to him something of a waste to take the intellectual equipment gained by the labor of a dozen years and more to superintend the cultivation of grain and vegetables; but what was he to do?

Already the towns and cities were overflowing with professional men struggling for a bare existence. If he joined their ranks he would only be snatching from some one more needy either the brief or the patient that otherwise would fall to his share. He had no drawing to the mechanical sciences; for book-making he feared he had even less aptitude, and of books there certainly did not seem to be a dearth; neither did his country seem to be suffering from a lack of politicians; while the dream of his boyhood that one day it might be his work to found and occupy a chair in biblical literature in the arts course of a university had grown dim amid the activities of a very busy life. No wonder then that he felt keenly the perplexity that confronts so many honest and ambitious young men. While he coveted the splendid opportunities of the eloquent preacher to help humanity in the multitudinous ways open to those who are thoroughly consecrated and fearless, he had never permitted himself to dream of such possibilities for service coming to him.

Just before commencement a letter came from Mr. Dolliver. He had come home to die, so he seemed to believe. All the lonely journeyings up and down the land were ended. There remained now only the quiet passage between the two worlds—whether long or short, he little cared, since the King of the country whither he was going had promised to make the journey with him, and it must therefore be both glad and honorable. What most interested the aged pilgrim now, was the work that he longed to see his young friend undertake.

"I was not eloquent or learned," the letter said, "but with God's help I have tried to make his world better. You have the gifts and the training which God did not see fit to give to me; and I am praying now, every day, nearly all the day,—for the nearer I get to seeing my Lord the more natural is the act of prayer,—I am praying that you may be anointed for his work, the work of the Christian ministry. The good Lord knows I wanted to work faithfully for him. I did not give up work until my strength was so far spent I could only get here by being brought upon a bed; but what I have done was so little, I doubt if I get much reward, only the smile of recognition my Lord will give to every home-coming child. You can do a far different work. You have gifts of speech, winning words, and a fascination that is the gift of very few, and added to all these natural gifts, you have the learning that so well sharpens the tools God has given. I have received the assurance that you are going to be called to this work. I know this because my Lord sometimes trusts me with his secrets, and so every hour, as it passes, bears some prayer for you in your future work. I am glad to linger here away from any company, that I may pray for you —prayers that you must work through many years to see answered. I have thought that you may not have many who would talk over your case with God, and that makes me the more busy."

Alan dropped the letter unfinished, for through it there had already come the divine call. Mr. Dolliver had written in the spirit of prophecy, or so it seemed to Alan, and through him had come the message direct from on high. He felt none of the unwillingness to respond that many speak of when called to the work of the ministry, rather a sense that the honor was more than he could bear, a feeling also of exceeding gladness that to him had been given the mission that came to prophet and apostle.

Then also came the thought how wide might be the range of his usefulness. If, as his student friends asserted, he really had special gifts of oratory, how much he might help others in that way; reaching wide masses of men who otherwise would not heed his words. After this he studied with new zeal, believing that no equipment of culture could be vast enough to do this work at its best.

After a summer devoted to Mr. Dolliver, business affairs, and study, and another college year, he completed his course, a much wider one than was usually taken at Brown, and then, seeking for the most varied opportunities for extending his mental horizon, he resolved to take two years at Oxford and finish at one of the great German universities. As far as he could master those vexed problems that lead immature minds into unbelief, he resolved to do so, firmly believing that no workman requires such preparation as the one who deals with questions pertaining to the soul of man and eternity.

CHAPTER XVII

CLIMBING

ALAN did not neglect the lads in whose behalf he had already taken such deep interest. The summer he graduated, he took them with him to the farm again, with the exception of Mike, who was getting along finely with his new friends, working through the day at the healthful tasks of the farm laborer, and busy with his books during the evening. Mike had his ambitions.

"I'd like to be doing some other work than will end with the day," he said to Alan, when he came to make a short visit at Deeplawn.

"No work that you do on the farm can well end with the day," Alan said. "If you are sowing seed, that certainly does not end with the day, and just so through the long round of a farmer's duties."

"I know that, but my share of it ends there, and I want to learn all I can about the world I live in. I want to be something better than a farm servant. Our family has been at the foot of the ladder and now I want to begin climbing, and help them up too, if I can."

"There must be farm servants," Alan suggested, more to draw Mike out than for any other reason.

"Of course there must, but that is no reason why I should be. They are generally contented to be that, and I am not."

"Ah, I like that. Discontent is one of the great factors in our world's progress. There is a kind of discontent that has something of the divine in it. What I object to is the disappointment that comes through ignoble ambitions."

"I mean to get fitter, as far as I am able, for some good place in the world, and I mean to look for it too."

Alan was surprised at the improvement in speech that the two years had brought to Mike. He had improved in other ways as well, and there were few traces of the slum life from which he had been rescued now clinging to him.

Anselmo was growing now into quite a healthy, tough-fibered young fellow. His patron, young Blake, had never quite lost his interest in the fiery little Italian. The weeks they had spent together in Newfoundland, followed by a further term on the Gloucester coast, had revealed to each that considerable imperfection was a characteristic they shared in common, but this knowledge unfortunately had failed to make them overlook the other's shortcomings. Alan's example had held Blake, to some degree, faithful to his charge, while the brightening face and well-rounded contours of the once angular boy, were fair recompense for the trouble incurred.

Anselmo, however, held him in very humble estimation compared with Alan, and when the chance was now given to choose between Deeplawn and Cape Ann's rugged profile, the eagerness with which he decided for the former place left his patron both mystified and chagrined. He had patronized him now for two years, giving him clothing and many a stray quarter, and now he was disappointed to find how little hold he had on the boy's heart.

"He is an ungrateful little monkey. I have a mind to wash my hands of him entirely," he said, as he looked at the unconcerned youth.

"You must try love on him as well as pennies. It goes deeper into the heart of the raggedest urchin you will find," Alan said, as he bestowed a smile on the swarthy Italian, who loved him better than any one in the world, and whose dearest ambition was gratified by the prospect of a month at Deeplawn.

What a summer those boys had together! The month originally promised them was lengthened by weeks, and for a few days all the young men of the Newfoundland excursion who were near enough to come, joined them by special invitation. Alan was anxious that the interest between the lads and their former patrons should be maintained, and it amused as well as pleased him to see how the old feeling of ownership revived. If these young men could be influenced to take a lasting interest in their respective boys, see that a useful trade was given them, as they could all easily afford, and help them to get a start in life, what a mutual blessing it might be.

Anselmo's father found his way to Deeplawn with a hand-organ and monkey. To appease his housekeeper, Alan had taken for the boys' quarters a huge granary that stood empty all summer until the fall threshings, fitting it up with hammocks and cots, and here the boys spent some of their gayest hours. There was always a spare cot for a friend, and no visitor was more welcome than Lagoni with his monkey and organ. He stayed a few days and then penetrated farther into the country in search of pennies, but soon returned resolved to make a lengthened sojourn. The hospitality was so bountiful he felt safe to venture upon it for a week. So many full meals in succession would be a rich experience for himself and monkey. Anselmo catered for him in the kitchen, and brought the food to the granary, watching the supplies disappear with great complacency. His one regret was that the entire Lagoni connection was not there to share the abundance.

Alan took little notice of the self-invited guests.

If too many friends from the city slums came, he might be compelled to interfere, but a solitary Italian with a hungry-faced monkey, scarcely set a precedent for many to follow. Other visitors, as a rule, limited their stay to a day or two. Alan sometimes caught a glimpse of the burning eyes in the pinched face following him with a dumb wistfulness, and was glad to make the poor creature's life happier for a few days.

One day he produced a complete outfit to replace the picturesque tatters. The garments were second-hand, but so skillfully remodeled by Mrs. Dingwell, they looked like new. When Lagoni was given to understand that they were for him, his eyes grew luminous with emotion and as Alan walked away, the hand-organ fairly gasped as the excited musician ground out opera airs and love songs one after another. Anselmo, although ready to quarrel with his father on the slightest provocation, loved him after a fashion, and his gratitude when he saw his parent proudly walking up and down the granary in his new clothes, was only second to that of the happy wearer himself.

The other boys shared the satisfaction of the Italians. The hand-organ and monkey had made them a very united family, so much so, in fact, that they forgot to be jealous of the lion's share of good things falling to their Lagoni acquaintances.

It was quite a gloomy day when the hand-organ and monkey departed. Lagoni was anxious to appear among his friends while still his garments were fresh. He could well anticipate the admiration of acquaintances for his good clothes, when they were all assembled at the Italian chapel on Sunday morning. Anselmo accompanied him some miles on the journey and so successful were they in drawing the pennies, that Lagoni felt rich enough to take the train for Providence, while Anselmo make the journey back on foot feeling quite light-hearted, for his father had given a halting promise to come out with the family and take up life as a farm servant.

Anselmo had taken him to visit the Dingwells, and the very homelike and thrifty appearance they presented was more eloquent than any words that Alan could use in bringing him to this decision. Mike's appearance too, was helping to strengthen the boys' discontent generally at their own rate of progress in the city. He had more money in the bank than they owned altogether, while his scholarship was far in advance of the best of them.

"We were fools and nothing else that we didn't all come when he did." Billy Spencer voiced the sentiments of the whole crowd as he said this, one rainy day, when they were sitting in their airy bedroom discussing matters in general.

"It' a great pity we can't go back a spell in our lives and do better than we've done," Jacob Molensky said, with considerable regret at the great mistake he, for one, had made two years before.

"We're only young fellers yet, and it's not too late to begin now," Anselmo said, hopefully. "See what old folks come to this country to begin their lives new."

"Yes, and what a mess a good many make of it. They think they must live in the cities, and they just burrow and starve. I'd sooner starve in a warm country than a cold one like this," a pinched-faced boy, called William Mooney, said. He had a consumptive look, and appeared as though he was not likely to need a home anywhere in this world much longer.

The result of that day's conference was that they one and all decided to come to the country with or without their friends.

CHAPTER XVIII

LIFE AT OXFORD

ALAN'S course at Brown completed, he went that autumn to Oxford. The boys were sent to their appointed places, and early in September he sailed for England. Mr. Dolliver was still lingering on the shores of time, but neither he nor Alan expected to ever again see each other in this world. Their parting, however, was not sad. To each of them had come the consciousness that the two worlds, the natural and the spiritual, are not so far apart; perhaps defective vision is the only separation.

Alan took with him letters of recommendation from professors and friends in America to several of the Oxford dons, and these he presented on his arrival. He was not acquainted with their contents; if he had been, in some cases his natural modesty might have prevented his delivering them. He gravitated at once to the company of evangelical students who lived, in one sense, as distinct from the great mass of young men as did the "holy club" in the days of Whitfield and the Wesleys. Yet they were not separatists in any derogatory sense. Representatives from them were the foremost athletes; others held their own among the list of distinguished scholars; but still they were as unlike the gay, worldly students as if they were of another order of creation.

Some of these young men by right of birth would be expected one day to do their share in directing their country's destiny; rulers by inheritance they were first mastering the more difficult task of self-government. There were others whose rent-rolls annually counted far up into the thousands, who had already laid all upon God's altar and were now taking special training for missionary work in heathen lands. As he mingled with these young men, Alan realized anew the honor God had conferred on him by choosing him as fellow-workman with them, in the harvest field of the world.

Melancholy reflections often came, as he compared them with that brother over the seas, Rex, who might have been occupying an honorable place in the world. The thought of this haunted him constantly, making him exceedingly reticent with fellow-students. He never spoke of home or kindred, and studiously avoided close intimacy with any of them, always refusing invitations to visit at their homes. He was dubbed Melchizedek by some of the wags, since he seemed to be one alone in the world.

They very well knew that he did not come from the newly rich. Trained from babyhood themselves, they recognized in him those subtle tokens of the gentle-born that money can never buy any more than it can brains, or the genius that produces a Hamlet or an Angelus. But, notwithstanding his reticence on the matter of family history and connections, he was admitted by degrees into the charmed circles open only to those of noble heritage of birth or brains.

Alan was deeply interested in these new experiences in the highly cultured society to which he was admitted. He clearly saw its defects, for the pride of birth and position as well as of intellect was very strong. There was also too much of the dilettante about the religious life.

Among the renowned college dons there was little that savored of the cloister, or of self-denial for conscience' sake, but they had their moral excellencies, and for the youth who was closely studying them, they served as a contrast, sharp and clearly cut, for the other extremes of humanity among whom he went when leisure and opportunity offered. After a week of hard work, broken by an occasional refection in fashionable drawing rooms, he would slip into London on the Friday, and, taking lodgings in some malodorous East End quarter, would go down to the depths of human degradation. It was his way of keeping his heart healthy and crowding out the worldliness and pride of life for which he had a horror, born of strong temptation thereto.

None of his student friends knew how he spent those holidays, or what fascination drew him from them so mysteriously, and forbade him all enjoyment of the home life of the higher ranks to which classmates had often invited him. But one day one of his student friends, a prospective baronet, came across him in those dreary moral and social wastes. By chance, or it may have been by divine prevision their paths intersected there, for each was working out his own ideals of duty according to his light.

Alan flushed uneasily when his friend came into the mission hall, for they had been for some time friends, approaching intimacy. He had been talking to a motly crowd, who hung on his words with an eagerness that would have been flattering to a more self-conscious speaker, but he went bravely on with his address, while he felt the thrill of inspiration that comes from a listener mentally a peer. At the close, Seymour waited for him.

"Is this what you are about?" he asked, with a grip of his muscular hand that told Alan at once he was in hearty sympathy with his work.

"It would seem that we are in the same boat," Alan said, drily.

"Well, yes, I am trying to do a little, but I did not know you went so far afield."

"Is it hopeless work, do you think?" Alan asked, somewhat wearily. He had been going about all day between garrets and mission halls, visiting the sick and dying, and speaking to men and women in even worse condition than some of the sick he had visited, and the misery he had met was pressing heavily on his heart.

"We have our marching orders to go out and work, our Captain will care for results. I do not let myself worry over the great mass of sin. What is the use? But I try to do something by way of lessening it, and there my responsibility ends."

Alan looked at the high-bred, handsome youth and felt a strong admiration mixed with a warmer sentiment, for this noble young fellow who could so far forget himself as to leave an elegant home in Mayfair, and congenial society, for work like this. The world would surely be restored some day to something approaching its original purity, since there were so many giving themselves to the work of accomplishing it. Alan's face grew more cheerful as he said:

"It does me good to meet you here. I have been feeling particularly discouraged for I have seen so much misery to-day. It has seemed to me that the Lord Jesus could never come into his own rights in the world he created and has died to redeem. What glimpses one gets here of the divine patience and longsuffering! I have never found such elswhere."

"I know it is horrible, the misery we see, but what if we were born in it, had it for our only inheritance, as these poor wretches have?" He swept a glance around the crowded hall, for a fresh congregation had been gathering, and a new meeting was just about to begin.

"When I think of that it seems as if I could not do enough to prove my gratitude for what has been given to me; but why do you come down among our festering masses? We are not your countrymen?"

"Partly because every man is the same to me, no matter what his country; and besides, we are apt to grow selfish, our every-day life crowds out the thought of what men and women are enduring who have not had our chances, who have had no chance to grow up anything but depraved, who have had everything against them. I find coming here is an excellent tonic for keeping my inner man healthy."

"Ah, yes, I see you disclaim being purely a philanthropist. You study your individual needs as well. I fear only a few go so far into the analysis of their motives."

"I find my most healthful way to work is to forget myself as far as possible, certainly not to undertake too much analysis of my motives. If

I did I should give myself up as a worthless specimen. I think these poor creatures will find the help I give them much the same no matter what motive impels me to the task."

"I take exception to that statement," Seymour said. "The gifts we receive from another are affected by the spirit through which they come."

"That may be true philosophy, but I am glad to believe that religion has no cast-iron rules in the matter. I have known the veriest scamp get up in this hall, move his hearers deeply by his appeals to them to live better, and bring them out to the penitents' seats, as few consistent workers can do. These are mysteries which sometimes perplex me."

"That is true, but what I want now is to take you home with me to dinner. These problems will await adjustment later on."

"Do you mean to your own home?" Alan asked, with evident anxiety.

"Yes, my mother will be very glad to meet you. They all fancy they know you very well through my descriptions."

"I have no other suit with me—I could not think of presenting myself before your family in such costume."

"My dear fellow, that need not give you a moment's uneasiness. My mother, and all the rest of them, welcome my friends in whatever garments suit their convenience. You have no idea what a sensible woman my mother is about these trifling conventionalities. Yet Lady Seymour is a superb woman,—pardon my egotism for saying so,—and I think you will love her when you know her. There are few like her in this part of the world. I believe you are very opulent in noble women in America. Some day you will let me visit you, I hope."

Alan turned a very glad face to his friend.

"Won't you come home with me for the summer? I think you will like the quiet of Deeplawn for a while, and then we can go on long tramps in the mountains or along shore, wherever you like." Alan spoke with boyish enthusiasm.

"It is just what I have been longing for, but I hesitated to beg the invitation, especially as you are so reticent about home and kindred."

"I have no kindred nearer than cousins and uncles, except a brother; but he is a wreck through dissipation. That is the cause of my reticence."

"We take this tram-car." Seymour signaled the driver, and together they entered the car.

"I may as well go with you as far as you go. I am tired and shall make no more visits to-day," Alan said, as he dropped into a vacant seat beside his friend.

"Of course you will go as far as I go, and no farther for some hours to come. To keep you in countenance, I will wear what I have on." He gave Alan a critical glance. "It will make little difference what any of us wear where you are, since, by all odds, you will be the handsomest man in almost any gathering without much help from your tailor."

"I am out of sorts to-night, and would rather present myself before your mother some other time and under more favorable circumstances; I shall no doubt fall in love with her and want to visit her again," Alan rejoined, ignoring the compliment.

"Is it only the older women you are given to falling in love with?" Seymour said, with a smile; "or have you some sweetheart among those beautiful country-women of yours with the mammoth fortunes?"

"I never had a sweetheart in my life," Alan said, frankly. "My brother had so much of that sort of thing, that I made up my mind it was not going to be the main pursuit of my life, as it seems to be for some. If I ever fall in love I shall do my best to win the damsel, but I won't let it destroy my happiness if I fail. That is only one experience out of a thousand that go to make up the sum total of our existence."

"Hear him!" Seymour said, with a smile. "My dear boy, if you ever should be caught you won't philosophize in that calm way. When you are 'in for it' you will think it is a life or death matter; at least that is the experience of some poor wretches."

"Then I most devoutly hope I may never be 'in for it,' and I scarcely think I shall."

"Don't be too lofty. I hope I may be your confidant when the time does come."

"I promise to make you acquainted, if I do become a victim, with all my symptoms and sufferings."

In due time they reached the street that led to Seymour's residence, and the subject of sweethearts was changed to topics more suited to the day. Alan made no further resistance to his friend's entreaties. To tell the truth, he had a strong curiosity to see what this young man's mother was like. He had an impression that boys, as a rule, were mostly what their mothers made them by heredity and training. He fancied the lady mother of this young man must be of the finest quality of motherhood to produce such a son.

The house was a grand abode, but it was not the house so much as the occupants that Alan was interested to see. Seymour took him directly to his own room, where he was able to make a few needed additions to his toilet, and then he was assured that he would pass muster with the best. A servant was summoned and the command given for an extra plate to be laid, and then they proceeded to the drawing room for an informal presentation before dinner should be announced. Alan found a small circle gathered around a bright wood fire, some half-dozen or more ladies and gentlemen. He was able at the first glance to distinguish Lady Seymour, who at once rose and came graciously to meet her son and welcome the friend he had brought.

"This is Mr. Rivers, my American friend, whom you have heard me frequently mention."

The presentation was made so informally Alan was at once put at ease. Sir Thomas had the same cordial hand-clasp as his son. One of the other gentlemen proved to be one of London's most famous divines, whom Alan had heard from afar and admired, not only for his eloquence and strong intellectual grasp, but for his fearlessness in the performance of whatever he felt to be duty. Two of the ladies, he discovered, were daughters of his host. They struck him as pretty, ladylike girls, but not nearly so beautiful and fascinating as Lady Seymour, and she seemed to be drawn at once to him. There was a rare lighting up of countenance as her son Lionel described the mission hall, the speaker, and the motley crowd listening with such rapt attention to his words.

"I wish you could have been there, mother.

Some day when he talks to them we must go together."

"I shall be most glad to go," she said, heartily.

Alan looked his surprise.

"To such a place!" he exclaimed. "Surely you would not think of it?"

"My mother is not afraid of anything. She is as well known in Whitechapel as in Mayfair, I believe; indeed, her heart is more interested in the former place, I am sure."

There was reverence as well as admiration in the look Alan bent upon her, but he was silent. She met his glance and instinctively felt that just then silence was the highest compliment that he could pay her.

"I am very glad you and my son are friends," she said, earnestly.

A warm flush crept into his face as he bowed his thanks, but was again silent. The conversation then became general, but Alan still remained near her ladyship and she seemed pleased with his mute admiration. When dinner was announced he took the eldest daughter and sat beside her, but still his attention was divided with the mother.

When they returned to the drawing room, Lionel said to him, jokingly: "Have you fallen in love with my mother? I never saw you so devoted to a lady before."

"I certainly have fallen in love, but it is the love I would have given my own mother if I had known her; I never realized so keenly my loss as I do to-day."

"I shall tell my mother some time, what you say. I believe too, she has taken you into her heart. She does not often treat strangers as she has you to-night."

"There is no need for explanation or protestation when there is genuine friendship."

"What a philosopher! When I like any one particularly I want to tell them so, and have a compact of mutual friendship."

"You never made any such arrangement with me."

"Well, no, there did not seem any necessity. I felt I could trust you without a formal understanding on the subject."

"I can do the same with her ladyship, your mother."

"Women are different from us in that respect. You have no idea how inquisitive they are about the way their friends regard them. I fancy you have not had much experience with womankind, their ways and peculiarities."

"I have not, neither have I felt my loss very keenly until to-day; but if I had a friend among women, I would want her to understand that I cared for her always, no matter if I never told her so. Indeed, it seems to me it would only weaken the bond connecting us if it were necessary for me to repeat the assurances of my regard."

"I most devoutly hope some good woman will snare you before long; you will find yourself in a new world, where all your preconceived philosophies and axioms will avail you nothing. But we seem determined to fall into argument on this topic to-day. You must hear my sister Lucia play. I noticed you did not seem to get on very intimate terms during dinner. She is next best to my mother, only it takes a long time to find her out. She is as much like a sphinx as yourself, I believe."

Lionel went to his sister, and a moment after she followed him to the piano. Alan drew near. He liked music, but he was fastidious about that, as well as many other things.

"It seems to me I can tell what suits you in the way of music," Lionel said, as he turned over a pile. At last he lifted a folio and placing it before his sister, said: "This will suit the day, and I think the audience as well."

It was selections from the oratorios of several of the great masters. Lucia struck the opening bars. Alan failed to recognize the composition, as he was not deeply versed in musical lore, but he had a large capacity for the enjoyment of superior music.

He glanced at the player, the first time he had looked at her closely. Her face was in profile, fine and clearly cut as a cameo, with exquisite coloring. While she played it brightened, and a look of conscious power took the place of the girlish timidity that had at first struck him as her characteristic expression. She now looked more like her mother, or as her mother might have looked five and twenty years before.

Alan found himself more interested in the musician than the music, and was slightly confused when at the end of the selection Lionel turned to him and said :

"Don't you think Lucia interprets the thought of the master very well for a girl ?"

"That is not fair ; as if girls could not comprehend the best things," Lucia said, playfully.

"It is your age, dear, and not your sex, that I refer to. Remember, youth is something you will very quickly get over."

"May we have some more music?" Alan pleaded. There was a novel fascination for him in watching the girlish face lighting up and the eyes dilating. It was this more than the music itself in which he was interested.

It seemed they were lovers of music, for Lionel kept turning the leaves to new music while she obediently translated the score into fine harmony. Alan had never before realized what home life meant. He felt his respect for Lionel Seymour growing stronger as he thought: Surely it must be a sacrifice to leave this charming circle, and go down among the degraded and unhappy; to climb dismal attic stairs and kneel beside some trembling, dying creature, dreading the final plunge into awful futurity, and yet sick unto death of the world he is leaving.

The music ceased, when he turned impetuously to Lionel and said:

"You make me ashamed of myself. I never could tear myself away from a fireside like this, and go where we have been to-day."

"Yes, you would. Do you know it was some words of yours that first made me think about my life, what it was, and what it might be? That is why you are more to me in some ways than any other man in the world."

Lucia was standing near, her face still lighted, her eyes shining through a suspicion of tears. Alan turned slightly away. What had been said, following close upon the thoughts that had been smouldering in his heart, had sent the hot blood mounting to his temples. Lionel went on, after a rather constrained silence, to say:

"It never occurred to me to make this confession to you before. It did not seem necessary; for you always impress me as so complete in yourself, words of praise or blame are alike to you."

Alan turned to Lucia and said :

"Your brother scarcely gives me my due. I do not think any one could enjoy praise from friendly lips more than I; my life has been a singularly lonely one, especially in regard to kindred."

"That is the reason some of our wags have dubbed you Melchizedek; we never heard you mention the existence of a single human being connected with you by the tie of blood."

"As I told you before, to-day, I have no near relatives save a brother, and he is hopelessly insane."

Lucia looked excedingly shocked, which Alan did not fail to observe, but if she could have known what an effort it was on the part of their guest to make the confession, that was to him so dreadful and yet seemed so imperative, she would have been still more so.

"My dear fellow, don't mention it."

"Well, I told you the very worst; it only seemed honorable that I should do so."

The brother and sister exchanged expressive glances, but they were lost upon Alan, for just then he was busy studying the pattern of the rug at his feet.

The hour was getting late and it was time for him to leave. He was wishing most devoutly that this was a middle-class family where etiquette was not so rigid. He longed to come here for a few hours every time he came up to London; probably that would then be oftener than ever.

To his deep satisfaction, when he was taking his leave, an invitation to repeat his visit was as cordially extended as if he had been going from a peasant's cottage.

CHAPTER XIX

ANTICIPATIONS

ALAN returned to Oxford the following morning with his mental horizon considerably widened.

He had never realized before how rich life might be; what varied sources of happiness God in his love had provided for man. He talked with Seymour about it, for they occupied the same compartment, when at last the latter burst out:

"Why, Rivers, I should say you had fallen in love with Lucia, only that I know it is impossible."

Alan gave him a keen, surprised look, and then said, dryly:

"Yes, I know such a thing should be impossible, but we are not always able to control our wishes."

"But—" Lionel hesitated, and then pushing boldly on said, "you misunderstand me. I mean that you are not one to fall in love so suddenly; you are too much of a philosopher for such weakness; and then Lucia seems only a child."

Alan was silent; forgetting his promise of the previous day, he would not talk over this perplexing, torturing phantasy that had seized him, so strange and different from any experience he had ever known, but holding possibilities of happiness or bitterness that were bewildering.

Lionel waited for him to say something further, but Alan turned his face to the window, and was apparently absorbed in the landscape. At last Lionel broke the silence by asking:

"When shall we see you again in London?"

"I cannot say."

"My mother bade me ask you to stay with us the next time you came."

"Your mother is very kind, but——" he hesitated.

"There can be no buts. My mother has taken a strong liking for you. However, she did not bid me convey that piece of information to you."

"I may not go to London again until we sail for America. You will not fail me in that?" There was a boyish eagerness in face and voice as he made the request.

"I shall certainly not fail you, life and health permitting. My mother is charmed with the idea, and has half promised to come over in the fall to return with us."

"And your sister, will she come too? I think she would like Deeplawn and our boys."

Lionel shot a keen glance into the eager face, and read there what the other scarcely understood as yet.

"Very probably my sisters will both go. I know they will be wild to do so, when I convey to them your very kind invitation. My mother always takes them with her when she is traveling. She is their head teacher, although they have tutors besides. My mother is very strong on education."

Lionel noticed that the depression, which had at first puzzled him, now quite gave way to unusual exuberance of spirits, but he also found it useless to press any further the question of another visit to his home. He asked at last:

"What did you mean when you spoke about your boys at Deeplawn? They cannot be brothers or nephews?"

"No, they are of different nationalities, and no relation to me except through our common brotherhood. I have Irish, German, Italian, and our native-born American, represented there."

"Where did you get them, and what are you doing with them?"

"I picked them up while I was at Brown. They are genuine 'slummers' from the most degraded parts of Providence. I began with thirteen, but some have gotten into other homes, and some have gone back to the depths from which I tried to draw them. The others I have scattered among the work-people on my property. I am wanting to make farmers of them all. Indeed, if I can accomplish it, I want some day to take a whole colony out into the far West. I am negotiating now for a large tract of government land for the purpose."

"Why do you want to make them all farmers?"

"A good many have wild blood in their veins, and a strong temptation to evil through heredity. I believe there is no calling so safe for such as the agricultural. I am trying to work on scientific principles, and not to blunder any more than is necessary in the dark, but to make every penny expended bring its equivalent in helpfulness to somebody."

"Upon my word, you are experimenting in philanthropy on a rather large scale. Why have you never told any of us what you are doing?"

"I did not think any of you were especially informed on such work. Perhaps I have made a mistake, however; in the multitude of counsellors there may be larger wisdom gained."

"I did not mean that we could advise with you in your undertaking, but we could admire and appreciate your generous endeavors."

Alan smiled as he said, playfully:

"That would not help me any. I make myself content to work without other commendation than that which comes from the conscience."

"You are an entire commonwealth in yourself, I see. You must come with me to London during the Easter holidays at the farthest, for I want my mother to hear all about those boys of yours, and your Western colony that is to be. You may be sure that now she will accept your invitation to visit you in America. Those boys will take her, if nothing else would. How she will mother the poor fellows! You have no idea what a wide, motherly heart she has for such waifs and strays. I often have glimpses of the great love of God through that of my mother."

There were tears in the young man's eyes as he spoke, making Alan realize afresh how much he had missed through the loss of his mother, and, indeed, all the tender, gracious ministries of cultivated Christian womanhood. Mrs. Dixon and her staff of housemaids, for anything save attendance on his material comforts, were no better than so many lay figures, while occasional gatherings in fashionable drawing rooms gave him little chance to study the higher types of womanhood.

He plunged more eagerly than ever into study now. There was so much to win, as well as to accomplish for others. To make himself, by supremest efforts of intellect and will, as complete in character and mental development as he was capable of becoming, was his aim. The world seemed so full of possibilities, not merely for personal development, but for service, he felt every hour as it came was freighted with promise. Life appeared to him so superbly rich in its manifold gifts, if he were only brave and true enough to grasp it in all its completeness. While he recognized all its uncertainties and possibilities of anguish, he also realized that out of them might come development that no success or enjoyment could ever bring. So he was able calmly to front whatever the future might hold, strengthened by his confidence in the infinite wisdom to which he had entrusted everything.

Easter came and went, but he did not go up to London; he was perfectly conscious of a very strong drawing in that direction, but there were difficulties in the way of a further acquaintance that time and circumstance might or might not remove. In case it should be the latter, the better it would be for his peace of mind to see as little as possible of one who might have it in her power to test his philosophy very fully.

The time came, however, when he must make the visit or else appear ungrateful. Another college year had closed. The splendid ceremonies, when the hundreds of students year after year complete their courses, had passed by. Lionel Seymour was among these, and, with no particular work awaiting him he, with the others, was glad this portion of his life was closed. He was just now full of enthusiasm over the journey to America with Alan, which they were to begin in a few days.

Alan had consented to accompany him as far as London in order that he might, in person, invite Lady Seymour and her daughters to Deeplawn. He had been so reticent about his other visit that Lionel had well-nigh forgotten his suspicions, or concluded that he had mistaken admiration for a deeper sentiment.

They reached home in the late twilight. Lionel had fully expected his mother and sister to be present with his father to witness his graduating honors, but a slight illness had prevented his mother from coming. They found her able to receive them, although looking somewhat frail. Alan could not help coveting the welcome that awaited his friend, his mother and sisters seemed so proud of the limited honors he had been able to win.

"I do not know what you would have done if I had got on as well as my friend Rivers," Lionel said, modestly disclaiming their lavish praises.

"If I had any one to be so proud of any success I might win, that alone would be better than the honors," Alan said, feeling there was no one in the wide world who would be particularly gladdened or grieved over what he might accomplish or leave undone.

"You would have much more than your share if, with all your honors and successes, you had an admiring family circle to welcome their conquering hero," was the laughing rejoinder.

"And without that admiring circle to remind you of what you have been able to accomplish, you will soon forget your honors, and go on to fresh achievements. Is not that so?" Lady Seymour asked, kindly.

"It may be. One must fill one's heart with something."

"Your heart, I should say, was overflowing already," Lionel said. "Do you know, mother, he has a whole colony of boys under his wing? I tell him they alone will be sufficient attraction to draw you to America."

"I do not think I shall need even as much as that. My physicians order a sea voyage as soon as I am able to travel. They spoke very favorably of a trip to America. If you and Mr. Rivers will undertake to look after us while we are there, we shall feel perfectly safe to start out alone. Sir Thomas has a great dislike to a long sea voyage; even the trip from Dover to Calais tries his nerves severely." She seemed anxious to explain to Alan why they undertook so long a journey unattended.

"Shall we not wait for you?" Alan asked, eagerly.

"It is not necessary. Lionel could not content himself, I fear."

"If you desire it, mother, I will certainly wait for you." His face expressed his real sentiments more truthfully than his words.

"No, Lionel, I will not accept that sacrifice. I shall not be well enough to leave for some time, and then we shall have the joy of looking for your faces among the crowd when we reach the land. It will be something to anticipate."

She did not know the pleasure it gave her guest to hear her use the plural, neither had she any idea with what eagerness he too would be anticipating that meeting amid the crowd on the Cunard wharf at East Boston. He was naturally shy with ladies. To-night he was more so than usual. Lucia and Maude wondered that Lionel should see so much to admire in one so quiet, and yet they too recognized some rare charm about him, more easily experienced than described.

Sir Thomas joined them later, and then the experiences of the last few days were recounted. Alan noticed that Lady Seymour and her daughters were as much inclined as any one to make heroes of the men who had taken double first honors in their respective colleges; while she and Sir Thomas went over the family histories of those whom they knew, speculating how this or that one had suddenly developed intellectual powers not usual in his family. He was amused at the persistence with which Lady Seymour endeavored to trace their pedigree back to some remote maternal ancestress who had a turn for literary pursuits, generally with some success.

"One needs to have brains on his mother's side, near or remote, if he would amount to much intellectually, in my wife's estimation," Sir Thomas said, laughingly. "She holds us fathers very lightly indeed in those matters."

"No one has ever heard me express such a mutinous thought," she said, brightly.

"My dear, the dullest of mortals could read it between the lines; but, remember, I do not wish to deny your theory. My own children will be more clever if they take after their mother."

"That is a very gracious concession, Lady Seymour," Alan said.

"My mother is well used to those concessions," Lucia remarked, quietly.

"But they do not spoil her. We can never make her understand her actual worth, no matter how profuse we may be with our compliments," Lionel said, with a fond look into the lovely face smiling so tenderly upon him.

"Shall we turn the conversation? Mr. Rivers will be surfeited with the enumeration of my excellencies. We seem to reckon him as one of ourselves, it seems to me."

A quick look of pleasure flashed from his face, and she remembered that he had no near kindred, and to be treated in that way by Lionel's family would probably please rather than annoy him.

Alan was amazed when Lionel pointed to his watch.

"Do you know that a to-morrow is just upon us? Only three or four minutes of this notable day remain."

Alan took out his own watch to convince Lionel that he was wrong, but that too, proved that the evening must soon be a memory. Lucia then went to the piano, the evening hymn was sung, Lionel led in prayer, and the good-nights were spoken, thus ending one of the happiest evenings of Alan's life.

CHAPTER XX

WYNDHURST

LIONEL begged for a week before leaving for America. He was anxious to go down to Hampshire for a few days, to their country seat, and show Alan the house that had sheltered the Seymours for six hundred years; where the barons of the olden time had held high festival with the neighboring gentry and their own retainers. Here brides had come in their dewy youth, spent their brief term and then, aged and wrinkled dames, had passed to the other world, leaving behind them as tokens of their individual selves only a faded portrait in the gallery and nothing more.

Here boys and girls for twenty generations had indulged their dreams of valor and of happiness, and now were themselves scarcely memories, so poor a record does this world keep of the most of its sons and daughters.

Alan was charmed with the prospect of visiting this old baronial hall and willingly postponed his journey for the purpose.

Lionel was anxious to have his sisters accompany them.

"It will be gloomy in the old house without some girlish faces to brighten it,'' he pleaded. But his mother, with her keen sense of the fitness of things, was not willing to let them, unless she herself accompanied them, and this, in her present health, was impossible.

" Madame Malet will come then,'' he suggested. She was the French governess and a stickler for the proprieties ; but Madame did not approve any more than her ladyship, so the young men went off alone.

Alan was sensitive enough to wonder, if he had been to the manner born, would my lady have been so strict; but he did not let the troublesome fancy long affect his spirits. Lionel telegraphed for a team to meet them some twenty miles from Wyndhurst, so that they might enjoy the drive through country lanes and among the hills. They reached the Hall in the late afternoon. The approach to it was through a mile-long avenue of elms and oaks, with glimpses through the trees of park and meadow fair enough, almost, for a world where sin had never entered. As they drove slowly along Lionel said :

" Do you blame me that I have no higher ambition than to live here by-and-by with my boys and girls, making my tenantry as happy as I can, fulfilling both in letter and spirit the duty of the country squire? I will not, of course, confine myself to this, but do also what lies in my power to help the erring and wretched to a better life."

"It is, no doubt, a cheerful outlook into the future; but you must first make sure it is your only calling," Alan said, gravely.

"There must be the rich and poor, the high and the lowly. Is not that a necessity in the polity of this planet?" Lionel asked, a trifle anxiously. "You know Christ said, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.'"

"He also commanded the rich young ruler to leave all and follow him."

"You are yourself very rich?" Lionel questioned.

"My income is large, but I am forced to stint myself to make my yearly income and outlay balance."

"May I ask whence the necessity for such economy on your part?"

"Conscience commands it."

"You do not sell all, as the young ruler was commanded to do."

"For the excellent reason that my property yields a larger income than funds otherwise invested might do, and besides, it is safer."

"The command was given to sell and give it up, if you remember," Lionel persisted, with a smile.

"I have thought seriously about that too, but it seems to me that I can be as safe an almoner of my own means as any of the great religious corporations to which I might entrust it. My will is made in case of death."

"You think of everything, it seems to me. In this case can I not do the same? Keep my property, and use my own discretion in the way my gifts are bestowed? Or rather, do that when I come into full possession at my father's death."

"You may have a good many years to live before that takes place and you will have gifts unoccupied in the meantime. Could you not go to India, or Africa, any place that men are sorely needed, and accomplish before that time a splendid work, revolutionize in some way a thousand lives which in God's sight are as precious as ours? After that, there might be years of rest and enjoyment for you."

"Yes, and I might die in those poisonous climates, and what then? This property would pass into a distant branch of the family; I am the only hope of our line of the Seymours."

"Take your wife with you and send your boys and girls home to your mother. She would train them as well as you could."

"My promised wife would not consent to such a course."

"Have you asked her?"

"Certainly not, it would be useless. She is the daughter of an earl, a brave, true girl, but not willing to be a martyr by any means."

"If you ask her consent your duty will be done, and the responsibility will be with her. Pardon me for being so insistent, but the conversation was suggested by you. I am merely telling you what I think."

"Would you be willing to go out and bury yourself like that?" Lionel asked.

"I have envied the men who had the call. God knows there is nothing I would like better, but duty, and circumstances I cannot control, point in another direction. I have given myself to God's service, heart and soul, wherever he appoints."

Lionel was silent for some time, at last he said:

"I wish you could see Helen. If you could be with her for a few days you might inspire her. May I write her to come with my mother and sisters to visit you in America?"

"With all my heart I extend the invitation, but not with the expectation of influencing her, for any call that I might give to such work would not sustain her long amid the difficulties and loneliness of a foreign land."

"You might waken her interest; nine-tenths of the Christian world, it seems to me, are asleep. Sometimes when I am talking with you, the old question asked of the Master by his disciples comes to me powerfully, 'Who then can be saved?' The answer given by him does not quiet my conscience."

The carriage had reached the main entrance, where a woman in black silk, with a couple of maids, were waiting to welcome the young master. Alan glanced eagerly at the huge pile of stone. Gloomy enough it seemed as it towered above them, covered with ivy. The central part was very ancient, he could see at once. Loophole windows and frowning turrets confronted them with no cheerful air of welcome, but there were additions of a later date that had a more homelike appearance.

Lionel spoke graciously to the women, and introduced Alan to Mrs. Deems, the housekeeper. She was a heavy, stately sort of body, much more impressed with the dignities of the house than by the actual owners. She led the way through a long hall that ran all the way to the rear of the building, some seventy feet or more. A veritable museum it seemed to Alan as, in a swift glance, he took in its stately proportions and vast collection of interesting objects, ancient and modern.

"This part of the house is my mother's favorite," Lionel said, as he paused with Alan beside an ancient coat of mail, its empty casque presenting a more forbidding aspect than the most warlike countenance. "I mean, this whole room," he added, seeing Alan's look of surprise that this relic of five hundred years ago should have a special charm for one so gentle.

"I believe this place is full of people for her. When she came here a bride, she had at first a horror of it, and not until I was a little toddler at her side, making bold with the armor my ancestors used to wear, and with their swords and battle-axes, did she grow interested in them. She has a vivid imagination, and has read and dreamed so much about these old Seymours who have gone to dust that they have become nearly like real flesh and blood creatures to her. Lucia is much the same. She is never so happy as at Wyndhurst. My father tells her she must never marry unless her husband can take her to some such home. I tell her nothing short of ducal halls, with histories ranging back a thousand years or more, will satisfy her. She has such an alert mind, our few hundreds of years of antiquity are scarcely enough for her."

Alan turned abruptly away and began studying a jeweled sword that once was borne by Warwick, the king-maker. Lionel soon interrupted him.

"We must get ready for dinner. Mrs. Deems says everything is done to a turn. I have ordered our rooms adjoining in the older part of the house. We have a traditionary ghost or two there, and I thought you might like to form their acquaintance, if their ghostships are so disposed."

"It will be delightful, but I am afraid ——"

Lionel interrupted him.

"How can it be delightful, if you are afraid?" he said, laughing.

"I was going to add, I am afraid they won't favor me with an interview."

"I am very sorry we have no way of stirring them up, and I am of the opinion they have left us altogether. There has been no complaint laid against them since my mother came. Fresh servants may have had something to do with it. She did not care for the service when she came, and pensioned all of them, bringing in a new supply. It was no doubt more modern and comfortable; but, as a boy, there was nothing I enjoyed better than a visit to the garrulous old creatures to get them talking of the traditions and ghosts of Wyndhurst."

They had now reached the rooms appropriated to them on the second floor. There was a bright fire burning in each, which was a necessity because of the dampness. The tiny windows let in such broken rays of light, that the fires, shedding a cheery glow, quite eclipsed the sunshine. There was only a dressing room dividing their rooms, which Lionel planned they were to share in common.

"This is splendid," Alan said, heartily, as he stood surveying the quaint, antique appointments of his room. "How can I entertain you at Deeplawn after this? But remember, we Americans are only boys yet; five hundred years hence we may have old houses, ghosts, traditions, and all."

"You have something vastly better than these now, grand-souled men and women, who come over here and stir us up as with a trumpet-call. We will gladly lend you our old houses and traditions if you will help us with your noble workers."

"But none of you would care to go over there for life and leave behind you these treasures of bygone days," Alan said, a little sadly. "I mean those who own such things inherit them from long lines of vanished ancestors."

"One does get attached to such things; they pass down from father to son as much as the inherited physical or moral traits; but some do not seem to hold them very dear. Now and then a scion of our old nobility tries to escape from it all and plunges into frontier life in Australia, seeking to hide even his identity as he herds his sheep and cattle and looks in the rosy faces of his peasant boys and girls."

"It is only our own sex that does that," Alan said, taking up an ancient vase and examining it critically.

The dinner bell rang, and they were forced to hurry with their limited toilets, else Mrs. Deems' carefully prepared dinner might be spoiled. They retired early, after a brief hour or two spent in the library and a short stroll ; but when the morning broke Alan was astir. The views from those windows were so tantalizing that, leaving Lionel still sleeping, he had an hour's walk in the park before breakfast, besides a glance at the "Times" and his own mail, which had been forwarded.

They had a busy and, to Alan, most enjoyable day. There was so much to see, the gathered treasures of so many years, the labor of so many busy and artistic hands.

"What industrious creatures they were, and how painstaking!" Alan could not help exclaiming over and over again. "They shame us of the present day. We do our work by machinery. Only inventors and the artisans who put their inventions to practical use, do much real work."

"They had so much more leisure time than we. Life was longer because there was not so much ground to be covered. It makes me feel like a pauper when I think what there is to be done now, and how little time we have to accomplish it," Lionel said, with great regret to think that, with all his wealth, he was no richer in time than the humblest stable boy at Wyndhurst. In the portrait gallery Alan lingered a good while, and several times returned to study these faces, some of them with such marked characteristics.

"I can see your face here, or rather, I get glimpses of it now and again. Sometimes it looks out from a canvas centuries old. There is a strong individuality through all your family likenesses."

Alan was standing before a full-length portrait of a Sir Charles Seymour, who had walked the stage of life some two hundred years before. Lionel, as he looked at his ancestor some five removes away, was also struck by a likeness to his own father.

"I never noticed it before," he said, with evident pleasure. "Our family history tells us he was one of the noblest in all our line."

Alan looked at it thoughtfully for a while, then turning to Lionel, he said:

"It is enough to sober one when we think that our characters may affect those who come after us centuries hence. I have had the curtain of futurity drawn back farther to-day than ever before, through these pictured faces looking at us out of the past. I do not wonder that you Englishmen rise to such levels when you have so much to uplift you."

"We have some terribly poor specimens among our ancient families, I assure you."

"Dame Nature takes a breathing spell once in a while; she does not seem capable of heroic work for very long periods. I cannot help thinking so now and then, when I see the bungling work she makes of some men and women."

"That is shifting the responsibility from human shoulders, is it not?" Lionel asked. "Sometimes I am afraid it is man alone who does the bungling. We are all to blame."

"I try not to think that always. I see so many marred specimens, I try to believe that in some way, out of seeming ill, there will come ultimate good."

"I see you are a student of Tennyson."

"I am inclined to believe that our truest philosophy is taught by the poets; theirs is nearest the prophetic office of any of our latter-day writers. But let us come back to practical affairs. I want to look over your estate; I may learn something that will help me when I plant my Western colony."

They went out together, and for the rest of that day Alan was busy among ditches and plowmen, examining the appointments of the laborers' cottages, and trying to learn everything that could possibly help him in the judicious planning of that promised experiment for the betterment of boys and girls of whose existence he was still ignorant.

CHAPTER XXI

WHITECHAPEL

THEY returned to London on Saturday. They were anxious to be together on the Sabbath at Westminster Abbey and in Whitechapel, for they had decided to take the two extremes of religious service.

A very eloquent divine was expected to preach in the morning in Westminster Abbey. The afternoon was to be devoted entirely to slum work. Alan was better pleased to have the entire day occupied. He was strong-fibered enough to do his work without asking impatiently for the crowning blessing of every true man's life, the love of the woman he fain would win. The visit to Wyndhurst had accentuated the differences between his life and Lucia's. He was glad she was coming to America, but no stress of passionate affection would tempt him to tell her what she had unconsciously won. Perhaps it was better there should be obstacles in the way that could not be overcome, for his was but one life, his joy of heart a unit only among a hundred other hearts that he might make glad if he himself and his means were devoted solely to that work.

As they rode along, for they took the twenty miles back in the carriage, Lionel noticed Alan's abstraction, and was pleased that he was leaving Wyndhurst with so much regret.

"We shall all be down here in the autumn, and you can stay a couple of weeks with us on your way to Oxford. We will start from America earlier in order to give you time."

"Your visit there will be altogether too short to see all that is worth seeing. We must not on any account curtail that."

"I want you to see Wyndhurst at its best. You have no idea what it is like when we are all there, with a house full of visitors. We have tennis and all sorts of games, driving, boating, and shooting. I tell you, Rivers, you have set me a hard task to leave it all for years, and perhaps for life, to bury myself in the heart of Africa or India."

"I have not set you the task. My suggestion is worth nothing, unless another voice within you responds."

"I am afraid that is where my trouble lies. Whether the voice is right or not, I cannot say; but its call is the same as yours."

"You must consult with your mother; I think her spiritual intuitions are finer than ours."

"That will be putting her to a sore strait. Our English mothers have a very strong affection for their sons, especially only sons."

When Lionel met his mother she chided him for loitering so long at Wyndhurst.

"You must blame my friend Rivers, I believe he would exchange all the splendid future that his great western land offers him and become an English country gentleman. He is charmed with Wyndhurst. Every moss-grown stone from lintel to tower seemed precious to him."

Lady Seymour looked pleased.

"You must see it under more favorable circumstances. I was afraid you would find it very lonely."

"I would rather not learn to like the place any better. It will be safer for me to avoid it in future."

"We cannot permit that. I hope to see you very frequently, both there and here in our town residence. Wyndhurst is home; here we are only in residence. I have a fancy I should like to have a pleasant family group there, with Mr. Rivers to read to us as we sit at work. My daughters and I are doing some tapestries that our friends are kind enough to admire, and I should like to work in some figures to your reading from some favorite author. Very likely we should find a similarity of tastes also."

"The picture you draw is very attractive. It will be a happy fancy with me to believe it may one day become a reality," Alan said, with a sudden lighting of countenance. Why might he not sun himself in this woman's rare kindliness? Surely he could remember at all times what was due himself and another.

The remainder of the day passed only too swiftly. There was music, and a bit of choice reading too, for Lady Seymour divined that Alan had exceptional elocutionary powers, and soon they were by turns laughing and crying as he made selections from the various authors with whom he was intimately acquainted, and whose writings he found on the bookshelves around them.

The next day they went in a body to Westminster Abbey. The preacher, who was a high dignitary in the church, was equal to their expectation. Alan wondered at his own exceeding content as he sat by Lucia during the service, accepting her help sometimes in following its intricacies.

At luncheon Lionel expressed his regret that his mother was not well enough to accompany them on their rounds to mission halls and sickbeds. Lucia looked up eagerly:

"May I not go in your stead, mamma? Mr. Rivers and Lionel will take good care of me."

Lionel joined his entreaties, but Alan was silent, his eyes bent steadily on his plate; he was afraid to glance in her direction, lest she might too plainly read his wish. He did not know her ladyship was waiting for him to speak. At last she said:

"If Mr. Rivers does not think it a trouble to have you. Remember, a young girl cannot make her way so easily as the gentlemen."

"We will promise to take the very best possible care of her if you will only trust her with us." Alan tried to speak lightly, but his voice trembled with suppressed eagerness in spite of himself.

"Then it is settled, little sister. Remember you must wear the very plainest hat and frock in your possession. If you can make that sacrifice we shall be delighted to have you."

"I promise. You will scarcely know me when I appear dressed for the occasion. Mamma sometimes lets me accompany her, and I know just what to wear," she said to Alan, half fearing that he was still only partially willing to have her go.

"Lucia has half a mind to join the Salvation Army sometimes. Indeed she puzzles me with her changing fancies. One day she is a pronounced aristocrat, deeply in love with everything pertaining to the peerage and the old nobility; the next thing I know she is ready to go out as a missionary, or to join the army workers in Whitechapel. She really keeps us in a ferment with her varying moods," Lady Seymour said, playfully.

Lucia lifted her eyes in times to catch a luminous glance from Alan. Was it because she was sometimes willing to give herself to serve others that he looked at her in that way, she wondered?

Without trying to defend herself, or in any way disclaim these varying moods, she presently excused herself, and went to prepare for their round of mission halls and tenement visitations.

When she returned in a serge suit that fitted like a glove, but was still a marvel of plainness, Alan wondered why womankind did not always dress in that way. Lionel saw his intent look, and asked:

"What do you think of our little missionary now? When she gets into that costume I am afraid her next step will be to take the veil, or enter one of our Church of England sisterhoods. She is just the one to go any length if she fancied duty called that way."

"If my memory serves me it was only a few days ago you told me that nothing short of a dukedom would satisfy your sister's antiquarian tastes," Alan remarked, dryly. He was not looking at Lucia now, but was very intently studying a famous engraving that stood framed on an easel at his side.

"That fancy passes away whenever she comes up to London, for it is the traditions and relics of Wyndhurst that stir it."

"Then I hope she will remain in London," Alan said, impulsively.

"Is it not time we were starting?" Lucia asked with heightened color. Something in Alan's manner had quickened her pulse, and she did not in any case enjoy being the topic of remark.

"We will order the carriage. You can ride most of the way," Lady Seymour said.

"Please, mamma, let us take a tram and go like every-day workers. It seems like playing at mission work to go in that style," Lucia pleaded, for the time forgetting her recent shyness.

"Let me add my entreaties also," Alan urged. There was something very delightful in the prospect of starting out like common folk, hailing a street car, and keeping Lucia under his care all the rest of the day.

"Just as you please," her ladyship said, graciously; "but I am sure you would be more comfortable in our own carriage."

"I do not feel one bit like a self-denying mission worker this afternoon," Alan said, as they walked briskly along the aristocratic street a few moments later.

"But we shall do just as much good to those we go among as if we felt it a very heavy cross. I am sure if I lived in an attic, and was sick and alone, I should so much prefer bright, joyous faces to look in at me occasionally, than people who came just because their conscience drove them there." Lucia seemed to have caught the infection of Alan's fine spirits.

"It does seem a pity for such a happy creature to be wasted on a duke, and spend her leisure time studying up his ancestors," Lionel said, mischievously, as he looked down into the smiling, happy face of his sister.

"What do you mean, Lionel? I am not going to marry anybody. Please do not begin to tease, this perfect day," she pleaded, gently.

Alan forgave Lionel on the spot, for having drawn that assurance from his sister.

They soon entered a car, which chanced to be a crowded one. Some one moved and gave Lucia a seat, while Alan stood guard over her, quite forgetting Lionel, who was standing by rather forlornly.

Arrived at the end of their journey by the car, they plunged at once into the depths, climbing rotten staircases, going down into gloomy cellars, and now and again finding a moment's relief in some more humanized abode, where respectable poverty found shelter; but every place they entered Lucia had visited before, and was welcomed by the poor creatures in a way that quite amazed Alan, who was unused to such demonstrations from the people in the districts he had visited.

"Why do they all seem so glad to see you?" he asked.

Lionel answered for her.

"They have keen instincts, if nothing else, and they know she loves them and pities them; besides, she has been coming here since she was a child. Our mother had very peculiar ideas about the training of her children."

"Has your coming done them much good? I noticed the whisky bottle in a good many places." He spoke bluntly, but he too was in earnest about helping them, and had his peculiar ideas.

"I sometimes tell mamma that it is little use helping them, for the money we give very often goes for gin; but what can we do?" Lucia asked, helplessly.

"Perhaps you will try my plan. I never give such people a cent of money, except in the shape of food or clothing, but I try other methods."

"What are they? Pray advise us to some better plans than we have yet tried. I get sadly low-spirited after two or three hours spent here," Lucia said, wearily.

"We will drop into the next mission chapel and rest. I promised your mother to take care of you, and I fear I am not keeping my promise," Alan said, a little ruefully.

They soon found seats in a quiet corner of a great, gloomy church that had stood facing the sin and misery of this huge city for at least two centuries, and then Lucia repeated her request.

Alan explained his methods fully.

"Let us coax mamma to try the same plan at Wyndhurst," she exclaimed, eagerly.

Lionel smiled. "What will our neighbors say?" he asked.

"They can only say it is a new fad of Lady Seymour. You know people are continually saying that, and yet everybody admires and loves her."

"And if she did something that her conscience commanded, which they did not admire, what then?" Alan asked, soberly.

"I think mamma is brave enough to dare public opinion in order to be true to principle."

They sat in silence for some time. Then a verger came to prepare the church for even-song, and the young people withdrew.

"What shall we do next?" Lionel asked.

"Shall we not go to a mission service somewhere? We need not make any more visits to-day. I have a fancy for sitting quietly and listening to you talking to our people," Lucia said, with a glance specially directed to Alan. Lionel's description of that service weeks ago, when Alan was talking to the crowd in one of the mission halls, was still fresh in her memory.

"Ladies are permitted the same privileges there with ourselves. In that respect mission work is a long way nearer a perfected and just civilization than the most decorous services. I too have a strong desire to hear a certain lady worker in these parts talk to the people." Alan looked down at her for an instant. With a quick blush and nervous laugh she said:

"I am not clever like your brilliant American women. They set us a very beautiful example, but the most of us are either too slow or too dull to imitate them."

"If you do not make the attempt you will never know what brilliant possibilities of speech may be slumbering within you."

They reached a mission hall where an unkempt crowd was gathering. Alan had often been there before, and some of the poor creatures were quick to recognize him, since several full and most enjoyable dinners had fallen to them through his generosity. The handshakings were hearty—perhaps a dinner might be provided that very night. Some of them were in sore need of it. The leader at once recognized the distinguished visitors and pressed anxiously forward. The speakers were few that day and of inferior quality; if these young men could be pressed into the service, what had promised to be a very indifferent meeting might prove an unusual success.

Lucia gratefully accepted the invitation to preside at the organ. Her nerves had been in a tremor ever since Alan suggested that she should give an address. She had found that he possessed a remarkable faculty for enforcing obedience to his behests—there was no knowing what she might be compelled to do if he said she had to address that blear-eyed, sodden crowd of men and women, but she could not well be musician and preacher too. He was standing near her keenly noting the fitful paling and flushing of the delicate face, afraid that they were overtaxing her strength, and yet dreading to break the spell of this dear companionship by returning to her home.

"Are you very tired?" he asked.

She looked up for an instant, but her eyes suddenly dropped beneath the expression in his which she scarcely interpreted.

"I am not tired, only afraid you will make me speak to them."

"I cannot make you unless you yourself are first willing."

"If you told me to do so, I think I should have to obey. That is one of your characteristics, to enforce obedience."

"If so, I never knew it; but I should like to experiment——" He paused and did not finish what he was saying.

The meeting began. A hymn was given out, and as Lucia sang to her own accompaniment, it seemed as if the very breathing was hushed that not a note might be lost. Her excitement lent a pathos and power to her singing that surprised even Lionel, who had never heard her sing so exquisitely to the most critical and cultured audiences in the drawing-rooms in Mayfair, and the keynote was struck for the meeting that made it one of the best they had ever attended.

Alan spoke after the leader had uttered a short prayer and Lucia had again poured forth her soul in glorious song. He too, had been lifted by it to a higher level than he had ever reached before when addressing any company, cultured or the reverse. He saw in the bowed heads before him and in the weeping faces of those unused to tears, that he was taking strong hold on his hearers. Indeed, for the time he forgot all save those whom he was seeking to help. When he had ceased speaking, he was amazed to find that others besides the crowd before him had been moved to tears. He looked at Lucia. She was finding it difficult to subdue her emotion sufficiently to be able to lead the singing.

The leader hesitated. Perhaps now would be the time to test the depth of the impression. Stepping to the front of the platform he urged all who were willing to begin then and there to live a different life, a more rational and purer, to

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"Lucia again poured forth her soul in glorious song."

come forward and kneel down in the front seats. One after another rose and stumbled forward. Lucia turned to the organ, and striking a few opening bars, began to sing with sweet pathos:

> "There were ninety and nine that safely lay,
> In the shelter of the fold."

When she ceased singing nearly half the congregation were on their knees, Lionel and the others from the platform busy beside them talking and praying, while sobs and groans attested to the depth of conviction that had settled on hitherto stony hearts. When the meeting was over and they were walking down the narrow, filthy street, Lionel said, enthusiastically:

"I believe that Lucia and you could do more to revolutionize this place, if you came here and worked together, than any score of workers combined, that are now on the ground. I tell you, splendid gifts will tell among all sorts and conditions of men."

"I think I should like it better than marrying your duke," Lucia said, mischievously, trying to make light of Lionel's new enthusiasm, although her voice was still tremulous with strong emotion.

"Oh, it will never do to let you marry any one after this. You have a vocation altogether different from wifehood. That would be a sad waste of useful gifts."

"Then you have decided I am to become a Salvationist?"

"I have not decided anything, but that the Lord will one day call you to account if you don't throw yourself heart and soul into this work. Why, those few words you said near the close sent a thrill through the dullest heart there; I had no idea my little sister had such possibilities hidden under this shy exterior."

For Lucia had spoken. Men and women in the audience, in broken sentences, had been telling what they were and what, God helping them, they wanted to be, when Alan, leaning toward her, had said: "Won't you say a few words to these women? Most of them know who you are, and what you say will have more effect than all our preaching."

She rose at once, and it was what she said that so wakened her brother's enthusiasm.

Alan was silent most of the way home. This afternoon's service had suddenly opened new paths into the distance, ending only with life. Might this not be the kind of work God asked of him, to go down into the lowest depths seeking for gems for the Redeemer's crown? He was so far indifferent to the ambitions of life now, that if the choice were left to him to work among the aristocrats of the West End of London, in those superb churches where the beauty and wisdom of England congregate, or in the malodorous precincts of Whitechapel, he would not choose, leaving that decision, as every other that had to do with other lives than his own, in the hands of the One whose wisdom is unerring.

"I wish you could transfer yourself from America to London," Lionel said.

"My dear boy, we have just as much need of workers in our great cities in America as you have here. What we all need is a fuller consecration."

When they met Lady Seymour at dinner that evening, Lionel gave a graphic description of their afternoon's work, ending with the crowning success in the mission hall.

"My dear child," Lady Seymour said, her eyes bright with tears, "that charms me more than the highest social triumphs that you could win."

"But, mamma, Lionel greatly exaggerates. It was only a few very simple words that I spoke. No one could help saying something after Mr. Rivers' wonderful address. I wish so much that you could have heard it."

"Perhaps we had better postpone the discussion of our oratorical efforts to some future time." Alan spoke impulsively, and later, as he was standing near Lucia, somewhat apart from the rest, he asked her forgiveness for any apparent discourtesy in his remarks. "I have such a horror of taking credit for any of these efforts to myself. I want to forget my own individuality in any work I may do."

Lucia looked up sympathetically.

"I think you need never ask my forgiveness for anything you may say. I shall always know you are right even if I do not quite comprehend your meaning. But this evening I quite sympathized with you after the very exaggerated way Lionel spoke about myself."

"I am afraid if we discuss that subject again I may offend as much as your brother. I felt the charm of your address more than any one there, I am certain."

She looked somewhat surprised.

"I do not understand why anything I said should touch you. It was only the poor, sinful creatures that I thought to help."

He looked at her a moment very intently, then glancing at Lady Seymour, who was coming toward them, he said, quietly:

"I shall hope to hear you talk to my boys this summer. I am expecting great things from that promised visit."

"We are also looking forward with great pleasure to our American trip. It seems hard that some of us should have so many delightful experiences in this world, and others none at all. I try to believe that there is a law of compensation running through all human experience, and that, underlying all apparent joy or misery, there are peaceful spots in every heart. 'Not one quite happy, no, not one,' your Longfellow says. But I say to myself, not one quite wretched, no, not one, save the utterly depraved—they must, of necessity, be unhappy, whether in a palace or the worst cellar in Whitechapel."

"Your daughter takes the griefs of her fellow-creatures very seriously," Alan said, turning to Lady Seymour, who had joined them.

"Yes, but she takes their pleasures so joyously I think she gets more good than ill from making her heart a thoroughfare for the friendless, and indeed, all who come within her horizons. I assure you, they are very wide."

"How could I help it, mamma, being your daughter?"

"My children are perpetually turning the tables upon me whenever I mention their good qualities; but a truce to that now. Sir Thomas has bidden me ask Mr. Rivers to give us a reading. He wishes to hear you read from some of your own American poets. I believe he has Thanatopsis turned down for you to begin with."

Alan complied at once, and the remainder of the evening was spent in reading selections from the poets of the nineteenth century, with discussion of their comparative merits.

CHAPTER XXII

IN SUMMER TIME

EARLY in the week Alan and Lionel left for Queenstown to take the steamer for America.

The season being favorable, they had a fine trip across the ocean. The tide of travel among saloon passengers being mainly eastward at that season, they were not inconvenienced by the throngs that, later on, make sailing to the west anything but a pleasure to those who do not enjoy being closely herded with a crowd of indifferent strangers.

On their arrival they proceeded at once to Deeplawn. Mrs. Dixon had been apprised of the coming of a distinguished visitor, and great preparations had been made, while all the boys were pressed into the service to put the entire premises in most perfect order. Among the score of youths now under Alan's care, there were only some half-dozen of the original thirteen. Several of the boys were studying for a higher kind of work than that of farm laborers, while others stoutly preferred the abundant elbow-room of farm work to the crowded foothold brain-workers of average ability find anywhere at the present day. The youths who preferred farm work were, without exception, of Irish extraction, and it devolved on them to contribute largely to the support of the entire company.

Alan, as far as was possible, wished to make this experiment self-supporting, and to this end he had large tracts of waste land reclaimed and brought into profitable cultivation. During the vacations the entire force of boys were expected to assist. An experienced man took charge and mapped out the work. The boys entered into it, for the most part, with great heartiness, and those summer expeditions into the woods, felling trees and piling the great logs in heaps for the autumn burning, were seasons of genuine merriment and healthful enjoyment.

The man who had them in charge had himself been on the Deeplawn estate from childhood, and took quite as much interest in all that pertained to it as did the rightful owner. James Longman, for that was his name, was quite an unconscious hero. He was so thoroughly honest, his name was already, at middle age, becoming a synonym for honesty. He really did not seem to study his own dignity any more than the huge Clydesdales, that found in him a perfect master. For every one, man, woman, or child, of whatever degree socially, he had the same reverential bearing, as if humanity under every circumstance was something to honor.

He was not a stickler for obedience, yet the boys who worked under him never seemed to think of disobeying. Alan regarded him almost as a brother, and Deeplawn, and all that pertained to it, was gradually coming under his sole charge. A loud or angry word never fell from his lips, but when his slow temper was aroused by some exceeding offense, the lad who had incurred his displeasure was sure to remember the occasion.

He helped the lads to select their own holdings, for to each who chose to stay at Deeplawn until his majority, a portion of land was given sufficient to make him a home. Longman was authorized to purchase all available lands that were in the market, and so judiciously were the investments made and the land cultivated, that already the experiment had ceased to be a risk.

If Alan had been charmed with the treasures and memories connected with Wyndhurst, Lionel was no less so with Deeplawn. The boys had come *en masse* to the station to meet Alan, headed by Mike, who had come to Deeplawn for the occasion. Anselmo was also there, and Jacob Molensky and Billy Spenser and Blinders, for he had found his way to the country with all the others; but they did not present the same appearance as when first we were introduced to them.

Those who were with Alan at the first were now grown men, or nearly such. Mike was a fine-looking young fellow, with an impulsive, open-hearted expression on his mobile face. He was quite elaborately dressed, even to brown kids and white cravat, and seemed perfectly conscious of the fact. Indeed, each one had strained every nerve to present a good appearance for Mr. Rivers' home-coming, since they felt perfectly certain that it rested mainly with them to reflect credit on him before his foreign visitor.

Alan and Lionel were confronted with quite a formidable array when they stepped off the car. Nearly every tenant at Deeplawn was there to welcome the young master. The score and more of representatives from the city, headed by Longman, beaming approval from his superior height, were all elbowing their way to the front. A goodly number of women and children formed the rear of the company.

Lionel stood in considerable mystification watching the eager company thronging around his friend, and wondered if this were a usual custom among Americans. He had supposed it was mainly an English usage, the welcoming home of the heir on his majority, but that period in his friend's life was some time past. It certainly could only be an expression of strong affection between employer and employed.

The handshakings ended, Alan summoned his friend and together they entered the carriage awaiting them. At the Deeplawn gates they found a triumphal arch erected, the work of the boys who had known of similar ornamentation for grand processions or in honor of distinguished guests, usually foreign royalties.

"Upon my word, I was not expecting such an ovation. It certainly seems as though I had found the key to my boys' hearts, or they would not go to such trouble in my honor," Alan said, with considerable feeling.

"Is it the work of your boys from the slums?" Lionel asked, with some surprise.

"Certainly. Did you not see them, those young fellows gotten up with such care?—a tall, broad-shouldered fellow heading the ranks?"

"Yes, I saw them, but it did not occur to me those were your waifs and strays."

"I shall make a formal presentation when we reach home. You will be surprised to see what well-spoken youths they are. My friends tell me they all try to imitate my way of speaking—pray do not think that is why they speak well; but if you had heard them five or six years ago, their slang and broken English, you would understand better what imitative creatures they are when their minds are set on improving themselves."

A little later the boys came filing into the library, as respectable looking youths as one might expect to see in a boys' academy, and as well conducted. Mike was their principal speaker, and very well he filled the office, in an easy but respectful way telling all the news that Alan would be likely to want, and arranging excursions to the different points on the estate where extensive alterations had of late been made. He had obtained a few holidays on purpose to be with Alan and, like the others, was prepared to enjoy them to the utmost.

Lionel was a most interested spectator. Certainly here was something quite beyond Alan's modest representations of his work for boys. He resolved to introduce something of the kind at Wyndhurst that very autumn. Perhaps God might intend that work for him rather than banishment from the home and friends he loved so well. Others too, among the great landed gentry and aristocracy might be induced to work in the same way.

How soon England might be revolutionized if men of wealth would turn their attention thereto! In a little while they might become just as much interested as in their present pursuits, experiencing noble rivalries in rescuing the largest number of waifs and strays, and building them into noble men and women. Alan certainly found more solid pleasure in these boys, their ambitions, successes, and general growth, than any landed owner of the fine preserves he knew. When the boys decorously withdrew, Lionel plunged at once into his plans.

"My mother, I am sure, will go into it heart and soul, and whatever she suggests my father hastens to put in practice, no matter how Quixotic her scheme may appear to the rest of us. I want you to invite every one of your boys and young men here when she comes, and make the best possible showing. If we get her enthusiastic, there is no knowing where it may end. Why, my dear fellow, you may accomplish more for the submerged of London, through your example, than almost any man in England, perhaps excepting three or four, Müller, Bernardo, Stephenson, and a few like-minded."

"I am not so enthusiastic as you are; indeed, I try not to think about possibilities, but practicalities. You will find very few of the country squires, or landed gentry, ready to try the experiment with even half a dozen pauper boys."

"You do not know what persuasive powers my mother possesses. We will get our establishment well started at Wyndhurst, Lucia will design some picturesque costume for them, and then my mother will invite some of her dear friends, beginning probably with some wealthy nobodies who will be thankful to do anything Lady Seymour suggests, and then on among her dear five hundred friends, for I think she must have that many ready to do her bidding to any reasonable extent, and so the work will grow."

"I will be glad if your prophecies have even a partial fulfillment."

"And now you will no doubt admit that I may have a very useful career before me, without being obliged to leave my native land," Lionel said, lightly.

"I most assuredly will. We need home missionaries quite as much as foreign, and I cannot conceive any work with grander possibilities than that you have just been mapping out."

"That is a relief, I can assure you. I doubt if the Lord ever calls any one to some special mission without giving him special delight in his appointed work, and I certainly did not have that in the mission you proposed."

"I only want that you should engage heartily in some work. It was dilettanteism in religion that I was trying to get you to avoid; we have too much of that in the churches for their own prosperity or the world's good."

After dinner the young men went to see the boys in their quarters. Several cottages had been appropriated to their use, and the boys did all their own work, taking week about in the kitchen. A generous rivalry was fostered among them, encouraged by James Longman, as to who should prove the best housekeeper. Small prizes were awarded the happy youths who developed a latent talent for tidiness and thrift. The cottages now were scoured to an exquisite degree of cleanliness.

The efforts at ornamentation were occasionally ludicrous and even grotesque. The artistic Italian and the heavy German tastes at war with Irish and American, sometimes produced strange combinations, but Alan was pleased with it all and was ready to reward every one alike. He went deeper than the mere disposal of chromos, vases, home-made brackets, and the like. Underneath all this he saw the love of beauty and of home budding in the youthful hearts, some day to blossom out in brown-stone fronts, possibly, velvet carpets and costly pictures, for no one could tell what successes might be waiting in the future for some of the lads preparing for lives of usefulness in these cottages.

It was quite dark before they had completed the survey of the nearest cottages. Lionel went home to dream all night of just such homes springing like magic all over England, for boys and for girls too, for he, with his mother's love for girls as well as boys fresh upon him, wanted to see them, equally with their brothers, provided with these opportunities to rise.

The following day he wrote many pages to his mother filled with this new project, and urging her to come over at once if the doctors would permit.

"You can rest and build up here better than at home, for the air is fairly intoxicating. I do not wonder the Americans are so clever, having such an atmosphere and such a wonderful country. I am curious to know what this country will be five hundred or a thousand years hence, if it goes on developing at the present rate. I only know the lost Eden might be pretty well restored, save for the item death, if all mankind were like Alan Rivers. I tell you, mother, he is a hero ——" and then followed a glowing rhapsody that would have disconcerted Alan had he seen it. But Alan did not know what his friend was putting on paper, as he went about with Longman, examining things with the keen, observing eye of the master who wanted every bit of property to yield its full value.

They rested a few days at Deeplawn, and then started on their pedestrian tour. Lionel had told Alan that he had been urging his mother to come at once, and Alan was anxious that his friend should first see more of the country he was disposed to admire so much. They took short railway journeys from one point to another over the parts that had seemingly been slighted in the work of creation, and in this way condensed the beauties of the scenery. They had soon taken quite an extensive view of the New England States, and then Alan felt it necessary to return to Deeplawn. Leaving Lionel to continue his wanderings alone, chiefly now among the cities of the Southern and Middle States, he returned home.

He was anxious to be with the boys, to arrange for their education or the putting to trades of those who elected to do work of that kind. He trusted much to Longman's judgment in deciding each boy's special aptitude for brain or manual labor, and the trade in which each would be most likely to excel.

The few following weeks were very busy ones indeed. Several of his boys were now old enough to be apprenticed, others were prepared to take positions as bookkeepers or salesmen, while two or three were eager for professional careers. For these he wished to obtain situations as teachers, for it was not Alan's idea to help any of them further than was really necessary. It might take a few more years for them to fit themselves for their life-work; but that counted for little in his estimation, compared with what the means saved to him might do for others.

Their numbers he found would be reduced by these changes one half. This permitted him to take into the cottages, and under Longman's care, as many more boys from the congested streets of the city. In deference to Lionel's request, he decided to let the departing boys remain until Lady Seymour's arrival. New importations would not give her an idea of the work accomplished, but the improvement in those who had spent some time at Deeplawn might better be perceived if a few raw recruits were also imported just before she was expected.

With this end in view he went to Providence and made his selection, a few days before the steamship on which Lady Seymour was expected was due. Lionel met him in the city, and together they visited those dolorous tenements for the youths whose futures were to be revolutionized. A hard task it was to make the selection. Alan wanted the very friendless, but there was so large a supply of these, the trouble was to decide whose need was the greatest.

CHAPTER XXIII

PEERESS AND PAUPERS

THEY all, peeress and paupers, went to Deeplawn by the same train. Alan had a large-minded way of combining things, and it seemed to him perfectly proper that they should arrive together, although he did so far preserve the proprieties as not to take his waifs into the Pullman car with Lady Seymour and her daughters. She had a glimpse, however, of her host piloting his six shabby followers into another car. A very sorry-looking half-dozen youths they were, some of them coatless and all barefoot, with grimy faces and unkempt hair. But there was a look of great satisfaction, on each pinched face, for Deeplawn, the land of plenty, and Alan Rivers, were subjects frequently discussed in that section of the city where they had been wont to burrow.

Her journey ended, Lady Seymour found herself too much fatigued for any farther sight-seeing that day, but Lucia was eager to begin the inspection of cottages and boys at once. She and Alan started out together, her dainty gown and sweet face making a very pretty picture, so thought the lads who were watching for her.

They were quite as eager for the interview as the young lady, and had donned their Sunday best for the occasion, while those fresh from the city slums looked on brothers and acquaintances with a mixture of envy and expectation. Before long, they too would be relieved of their rags and provided with good clothes. Mike was again on hand, and Anselmo had come on purpose to meet Lady Seymour. Both were old enough to wonder if this pure-faced girl might not some day become mistress of Deeplawn.

Lucia entered heartily into all the details as Alan explained them, examining the boys' contrivances for comfort and ornamentation in the different cottages and making suggestions that filled Alan and his boys with wonder at their own stupidity in not thinking before of such simple additions to their household arrangements.

"Indeed, ma'am, Mr. Rivers is needing a better woman to look after them here than Mrs. Dixon. She's all very well for the butter and preserves, but you have helped the boys more with advice in two hours than she has in all the years since we came here," Mike said admiringly when, the survey ended, they sat chatting in the cottage where Mike was staying. His own brother was one of the housekeepers, a promising boy, who one day might be an alderman, so bent was he on becoming a lawyer.

Alan cast a quick look into Lucia's face and saw the deepening color in the dimpled cheek, for she was smiling in response to Mike's suggestion.

"Mamma will be able to help you much more than I. She will be charmed too, I know. My brother's description, which we thought exaggerated, did not half convey how delightful it all seems. We were inclined to be amused at the boys' housekeeping, and fancied it was masculine ignorance of domestic details, rather than the boys' skill that made Lionel so easily satisfied."

"The boys do wonders, considering they never had any experience of what homes should look like until they came here. Dingwell's mother and sisters have helped a good deal, but their taste is none of the best in hanging pictures and fixing up a room according as I see houses fixed," Mike said, while he critically examined the ornamentation of the little parlor.

"Shall we hang these pictures over again, and may I arrange the ornaments?" Lucia asked, timidly.

"We'll be delighted, ma'am, if you will," a freckle-faced boy responded, who was housekeeper that week, and could therefore speak with authority.

"Permit me to be your assistant," Alan said, as he rose ready to obey her commands.

She gave the word for all of the pictures to come down, and then with a pretty air of anxiety she began studying effects, in which she appealed to Alan for advice. They became so absorbed in the work that Lionel came to see what had become of them while yet the task was unfinished. He failed to discover which seemed to be enjoying the work most, the boys or the picture hangers. Gradually the lads from the nearer cottages heard what was going on, and through doorways and windows were watching every graceful movement of the young lady from over the sea, while they exchanged whispered confidences, comparing her beauty with the "swell" young ladies they had sometimes brushed against on the crowded city thoroughfares. It is needless to say Lucia triumphed in the decisions.

The following day Lady Seymour announced herself able to make the round of cottages. The carriage was brought and the party proceeded first to the farthest cottage, some three miles away. Alan, after mature deliberation, had, in the beginning of his experiment, decided it the safer plan to have the boys as widely separated as possible. There were three cottages near to Deeplawn and two at the opposite extremes of his property. He preferred to have the larger number under Longman's immediate care, and these were a judicious mixture of good and bad.

At the first cottage they visited, Jacob Molensky was housekeeper for that week. His gifts in that direction were not well developed, if indeed he had any, but the other boys had come to the rescue, so that the house presented a fairly neat appearance. The outside of the cottage, however, was a perfect bower of beauty. Creeping vines had already climbed well up toward the eaves, while flowers brightened every available spot.

The vegetable garden was a marvel of neatness, for this had been undertaken by one lad, an American of Scotch extraction, whose ancestors had been under-gardeners on a great Scottish estate for generations. But "unmerciful disaster" had reduced Donald's family to a filthy tenement. From that unsavory quarter he had been transplanted two summers before to this happy home, and here he had determined to live and die, the instinct of localizing his habitation being strong within him.

The boys had felt they should extend some hospitality to their visitors more than seating them in the little parlor, so each one of the five had endeavored to do something to show his appreciation of the honor conferred. Huge bouquets of flowers had been gathered and tied up ready to present at departure. Fine blackberries and cream were standing ready in the milk room down cellar, and the seldom-used teapot had been washed and scalded ready to brew a cup of tea for her ladyship. This was Jacob's special work, and he was speculating anxiously how he was to convey his cups and saucers in correct form to the waiting hands. On the whole the boys conducted themselves with very good taste, and were proud of the favor shown their refreshments.

Lady Seymour's eyes bore suspicious signs of tears as she sat talking with the boys, drawing from them the story of their former lives and the satisfaction with which they looked upon their present surroundings. They were all surprised afterward as they carefully recalled the different incidents of the interview, at the ease with which they had conversed with her ladyship. Jacob felt considerable chagrin when he was told that he always addressed her as "Your honor"; but this, they assured him, was a trifling mistake, and she would be sure to know he meant no offense. When she was leaving she asked Alan's permission to invite them all to Deeplawn to a reception the following week, a request readily granted, of course. What speculating there was about that reception, how they were to conduct themselves, and what they would have to eat, while the dictionary was consulted to find out what it meant!

The party missed luncheon that day, but they had such abundant supplies of fruit and cream and very strong tea, that they forgot all about it until they came home late in the afternoon and met Mrs. Dixon anxiously waiting for them and inwardly fretting over her spoiled fowls and ices. At every cottage the desire to be hospitable was manifest. As each one had its own berry patch, and as the boys were not fertile in culinary expedients the menu was somewhat monotonous. However, at the cottage where Mike was stopping, were some fine pear-trees, and their fruit was served with very thin slices of buttered bread.

The invitation to the reception was extended to all the boys, including the six who had just come. Lady Seymour's eyes filled with tears when the little fellows came filing in with clean, smiling faces, and flapping rags.

"Yer needn't feel sorry for us, ma'am; we're jest as happy as us can be out here," one of them said. It seemed to his happy heart such an utter waste of pity for any one to be shedding tears over him. "If yer could see where we hev been and what we had to eat, yer might cry," he added presently, when he saw the tears still flowing.

"Mout yer please to tell her we don't want fer nothin' now," he appealed to Alan.

"She knows that, Sammy, but she thinks of the thousands of other little lads who are not so well off as you."

"Is that all the boy she's got?" Sammy looked up inquiringly at the stalwart young man whom he had heard address the lady as "mother."

"Yes."

"Maybe then, if she's rich, she'd take some boys herself."

"That is a splendid suggestion, my brave young man," Lionel said, approvingly.

Sammy looked very self-conscious and proud at this, but retired into the background, taking his picturesque tatters quite out of Lady Seymour's range of vision.

The other boys were rather inclined to chide Sammy, but as the young gentleman evidently approved of his suggestion, they concluded it was not necessary. Besides, they were so interested in Lady Seymour, feeling even in their skeptical young hearts the touch of a sympathy having something of the Divine, that when she left them they were in the mood for only the most benevolent reflections.

What a happy day it was to them all, as well as proud! To think they had been privileged to entertain a real noble lady, to have her eat and drink out of their own dishes, and talk to them more tenderly than had any other woman! Her graciousness had given them a glimpse of the perfection possible in women. From their experiences of the sex in general in their homes, and with Mrs. Dixon in particular, they had not formed a very exalted estimate of womanly character. Mr. Rivers, in their estimation, possessed greater excellence than all the women in the world combined. Mike, and Anselmo, and a few others who had found good homes where pure, high-minded women presided, of course, had quite different views, but it had never occurred to them to express them in any of their conferences.

The two young ladies also received a good share of friendly criticism. The boys shrewdly divined that it was altogether probable, if Mr. Rivers could accomplish it, that the elder daughter, who had such sweet, homelike ways, would one day preside as mistress at Deeplawn.

The Dingwells were as interested in the visitors as any of the boys, and Dandy carried home to them minute particulars of all that was occurring. He had grown to be a fine, healthy young fellow, with a set purpose to be a farmer and nothing but a farmer; a decision that exactly suited his mother. Mike made frequent visits to their cottage; indeed, no place in the world seemed quite such a happy spot as the small parlor where he and Allie Dingwell, the eldest of the widow's daughters, made plans for a life-long journey together.

The day of the reception had come at last, and at one o'clock the boys began to arrive with faces shining from a generous polishing, but expressive of some anxiety, for with all their acquirements they felt very ignorant of the etiquette proper for receptions and the society of ladies.

The Master of Deeplawn. Page 299.
"The day of the reception had come at last."

When they reached the lawn they found that imposing preparations had been made there. A pretty booth had been erected just in front of the largest fountain. At one end a table was laid for their refection, with such a repast as they had not seen before: frosted cakes, cold fowl, jellies, salads, fruits, and ices.

"My sakes, but isn't that grand!" Sammy ejaculated. He was the self-appointed spokesman of the last arrivals, and as each one was rejoicing in a new suit of clothes, he felt more eloquent than ever. But the work of demolishing those delicacies was not to begin for some time; other and more surprising duties were on the programme.

Lady Seymour was dressed with great taste and care in a rich velvet gown with exquisite lace, and diamonds that gleamed like stars. The lads wondered if the angels could look much more beautiful than this lovely woman with the tender face and gentle voice that seemed really to caress them with its lingering accents. Her daughters were gay in simple but silken gowns with falls of lace, and brightened with natural flowers.

Mrs. Dixon walked grimly about, thinking what a melancholy waste it was to bestow all that elaborate cooking on a parcel of boys no better, for the most part, than so many beggars. The new-fangled cook and his assistant, imported by Alan from Boston before his visitors came, kept her feelings in constant commotion. She had never seen or heard of such messes as they concocted day after day, and held herself aloof from so much as tasting his compounds; but Alan was provokingly indifferent to her sentiments, so she had to nurse her wrath in silence.

The piano had been wheeled out on one of the piazzas, and the lads had been invited to bring all their instruments of music, and as an audience generally takes more interest in a programme when they are expecting to take some part, so the boys eagerly looked forward to this as a means of distinguishing themselves. Like amateurs in general, they regarded their performance as the special feature of the occasion.

There was no public speech-making. Lady Seymour secured little bits of conversation, as opportunity offered, with one and another, apart from the rest. Afterward, some of the lads were considerably exercised over the fact that they had confessed as fully their most secret and cherished plans to her ladyship, as they did long ago to the priests in the narrow confessionals, whither they tremblingly went for that special purpose.

Mike drew Alan to one side at last and asked:

"Are there any more women in the world like that lady and her daughters?"

"Probably there are," was the smiling answer.

"Well, for my part, I didn't think they could ever be made so good. Why one wouldn't think they were made out of the same kind of stuff as our folks; now do you really think they are?"

"Yes, I really think they are, strange as it seems."

"Do you think we can be as good when we die? Not but you may be now—only women have a charm about their goodness that the best of men don't have. It's wonderful what they are like."

Alan glanced at Lucia standing by the youthful Sammy, listening with happy, smiling face to his remarks.

"Yes, Mike, it is wonderful, as we sometimes find to our cost."

"I'd rather like one of that kind, if I never did have the chance to marry her, than any other kind." Mike had for some days had his suspicions, and tried to give his word of consolation.

"And I would rather not." Alan turned away abruptly. He did not care to discuss this subject with any one, but he would as soon speak of it to Mike as any one in the world. He had no truer friend, he well knew, since Mr. Dolliver was peacefully sleeping in the churchyard, than this Irish lad. He inwardly resented being so taken possession of by another—his self-poise and calmness of spirit utterly broken; but he found himself powerless to shake off the glamour that was upon him. Would it always be so? Was it necessary? These were the questions constantly repeated, yet unanswered.

Lucia had promised him to play and sing for the boys. They were perspiring now from their own vigorous efforts in making melody. Some of them were very fair musicians, but it was very crude at the best, and somehow Alan felt that he deserved some solace. He interrupted the interview between her and Sammy, the latter stepping proudly away, for had the young lady not complimented him on his fine appearance?

"I think my turn has come now," he said, looking at the lovely face turned toward him.

"In what way?"

"Ah! that is the question I would like to have you answer."

"I will answer it if you will explain more fully what you want."

Then she might have read a different answer in his eyes, but he said only, "You promised me some music."

"Is that all?" There was a touch of disappointment in her voice.

"Would you have me ask for anything greater?" There was a quiver of excitement in his voice which he failed to steady.

"I will give you the music." She spoke timidly, with a heightened color, and went quickly to the piano. The boys came trooping around while Alan stood apart, listening to every note, yet scarcely enjoying the music that was sending thrills of rapture through Anselmo's heart and softening his face until he looked as gentle as the musician herself.

"Isn't it heavenly!" The young fellow addressed no one in particular, but the youthful Sammy was on hand and responded unctuously:

"The angels couldn't better it, I guess."

Mrs. Dixon came to Alan presently. She looked worried.

"That man-cook of yours says the ices ought to be eat at once or they'll all be melted."

"Very well, you can give the signal."

Mrs. Dixon had very little ear for music, but great care for the practical side of life, hence she had no scruples about giving the signal that drew most of the boys from the piano.

"It seems a pity, miss, to interrupt you, but the victuals must be eat or some of them will spoil."

Lucia smiled graciously into the perturbed countenance of the housekeeper.

"I am sure the boys will enjoy keeping the food from spoiling much more than listening to music."

"Yes, indeed, they are terrible hungry fellows. Mr. Rivers needs a deep pocket to bear such heavy expense."

"And a large heart also."

"Oh, yes; but he's got that anyway more than most people. We've never seen his like in these parts; but I'm told that over the sea you have some very benevolent people."

"Not many like him, I fear."

"Well, I'd sooner he'd be a little more like other folks in some things; though I'd not like to see him change, for, with the exception of giving so much away to poor creatures, I guess he's about as perfect as any one I ever saw. You can't tell anything about him, seeing him just when it's all plain sailing, but there's been times in his life when he's minded me more of the Lord Jesus than any one I've ever heard about. It's just wonderful that a boy with no more chances than he's had to be one of the high kind of Christians should be so good. I spoke to him about it the last time he was home."

"What did he say?" Lucia asked, with kindling eyes.

"Well, he wouldn't allow, in the first place, that he was any better than ordinary folks, but he did say that any good there might be in him was due to the change he met with when he was a boy. He got kind of set on St. John the Baptist, and the way he held the world so light, and he has tried ever since, I believe, to live like him."

"And he has succeeded wonderfully." Lucia spoke softly as she watched the boys being seated around the tables.

"For all he's so much in earnest about these things, he's not like the people that tire you with their religion. I never saw a boy so full of fun and energy. He's always been the smartest young fellow in these parts, and there's few that can match him in anything he tries to do."

Alan saw Mrs. Dixon talking more than her wont, and guessed that he was probably the subject of her discourse, so he hastened to interrupt.

"Are you not going to join us at lunch?" he asked, addressing Lucia.

"I think I would enjoy listening to Mrs. Dixon, if you will excuse me," she said, with a dimpling face.

"May I ask what she is saying that is so interesting?"

"You should listen, and you will disprove a cynical old proverb."

"You must not pay any attention to what Mrs. Dixon may say of me. I am all the boy she has, and she has been spoiling me ever since I can remember."

"I do not think she has succeeded very well. It must be hard, Mrs. Dixon, to see your life's work spoiled."

The worthy housekeeper looked mystified at Lucia's remark.

"You young folks are so quick I can't keep the run of your talk very well, but this I can say, if I've spoilt him, it's a pity I hadn't a good many more to spoil."

"Hear, hear!" Lucia said, clapping her hands. "That is really a very brilliant speech."

After that they submitted to Alan's guidance, and were soon engaged in demolishing the "man-cook's" ices and other compositions.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN UNDERSTANDING

LADY SEYMOUR was so well content at Deeplawn that she was not anxious to begin the westward tour just at once. They had planned to visit the wonderland of the Rockies, the dreamland of Southern California, the magnolia groves of the Carolinas, the marvels of Niagara, and the granite ribs of New England. Her ladyship cared little for the cities; she had seen enough of their sin and poverty in her own land. It was nature, fresh and comparatively untrodden, as it came from the hand of its Creator, that she was curious to look upon. To see this best Alan assured her it would be necessary to go across the border into the wildernesses of Canada.

Every day she had all the lads come to Deeplawn. Usually at evening, when their day's work was done and the toil-stained garments exchanged for the Sunday best, they would come trooping through the lawns and gardens, looking as happy as if there did not lie behind them a childhood of want, or before them an uncertain future depending on a young man's will. They had all the happy unconsciousness of care natural to the young.

Lady Seymour would talk with them, sometimes for an hour or more, suggesting plans for their future and often praying with them. She would earnestly warn them against the horrible vices and iniquities of many men, and urge them to avoid them as they would the most deadly poisons, when they should leave the shelter of Deeplawn. She had some peculiar ideas, the results of much earnest thought and study, on subjects generally ignored, and was so pure and brave that she could speak to these youths frankly of the great perils and snares awaiting young manhood. She did not believe in leaving them to gain their knowledge first under all the glamour cast about gilded vice. Afterward, when too late, the glitter vanishes, but the death's head remains.

They started on their journeyings westward the first of September. The weather was very hot, the air close and dusty, but her ladyship was resolute. She had come to see this great country so rapidly overtaking, after two and a half centuries of existence, the older countries on the other side of the sea. She did not intend that a little heat should frighten her from her tour.

They took frequent rests, always stopping in some quiet place where they could have plenty of breathing space. Alan had never traveled with ladies before, but he was as patient with their multitudinous wants as if he had been a *paterfamilias* of a score of years' standing.

Lionel assured him he was enough to spoil womankind in general, his own mother and sisters in particular, but Alan only smiled. All the time he most devoutly wished it might be his lot to humor the fancies of one special bit of womankind as long as life lasted.

He was by no means so hopeless a lover as he thought. The mother's keen eyes had long ago discovered his secret and did not view it with displeasure. She felt sure she could safely entrust her child's future happiness to his hands, and was waiting with some impatience for an avowal of the love she well knew existed. At last Lionel was consulted, but he could say little, save to repeat the conversation between himself and Alan immediately after that first visit to their London home, when Alan for the first time saw Lucia.

"You must have given him to understand, by that ambiguous expression, that it was useless for him to think of your sister 'other than as a friend,'" her ladyship said, anxiously.

"He need not ask my permission. I should think if he loved a girl it would be herself he would woo, not her brothers or uncles."

"You would view it just as he does if you were in his place. The ridiculous fellow no doubt thinks we would consider him not good enough for her because of his lack of rank."

"Mother!" Lionel could voice his feelings of dismay in that one word alone. Was it possible he had given his friend to understand this?

"What shall I do?"

"Ah, that is the question. One does not like to seem to force a confession. If Lucia could only understand—but there is not enough of the coquette in her nature to help in the slightest, in a matter of this kind. We will wait awhile, and if it is for the best everything will come out right,"

"Things do not always come out right in cases of that kind, and Alan is so stout-hearted he will never give way. Really these heroic people are a trifle tiresome to get on with in every-day life." Lionel spoke somewhat impatiently.

"We have not found him wanting in any other matter," his mother said gently. "We should not have found him so in this if he had rightly understood our friendship. What prigs he must take us to be, posing as philanthropists, and yet withholding from such a man as he must know himself to be, a chit of a girl like Lucia."

"You are a democrat, mother mine," Lionel said, with a laugh that still did not conceal his discomfiture.

After three weeks' journeyings they had begun to weary of the magnificent distances of this new world, and even Lady Seymour's courage grew faint when Alan assured her that they were as yet only beginning the tour she had mapped out.

"Some other time then, we will take the rest. We shall want to visit you again, and then perhaps you will take us under your care to complete the round."

"I shall never be too busy to gladly drop everything and accompany you," was the hearty reply.

"You may be married before that time, and your wife might object." Her ladyship seemed a little nervous as she spoke.

"I do not expect to ever have a wife."

"But why do you talk so rashly, may I ask? Are you proof against such things, or are you too much of a philosopher to stoop to ask for a woman's heart?"

"I might find that I must deny myself what I crave, because too high above my reach."

"Why use the word must? You have surely not fallen in love with a royal princess?"

Her own heart was in a tremor as she spoke, almost as much so as if this were a love episode of her own; but she was determined to set matters right though she might risk being called a matchmaker.

"It is not necessary to go so far as that, your ladyship, to dare too much."

"You should not miss your life happiness for want of a little courage, surely not in any case short of royal rank and obligations. Promise me you will at least make some effort to gain what you want." Lady Seymour trembled at her own boldness as she spoke, but she nevertheless looked up unflinchingly at his bewildered face.

"Would you be willing for me to ask your daughter's hand in marriage?" he questioned, almost sternly.

"I should be quite satisfied to entrust my child to you—but I do not beg you for a son-in-law contrary to your own desires." She blushed like a girl as she spoke.

"Dear Lady Seymour, there is no need to apologize for what you have said. I knew long ago that you read my heart,—I believe mothers do that by instinct,—and I also knew that you forgave me, since how could I help loving her? But I did not dare believe that you would willingly consent to let her step down from her own rank to marry me, and I would have gone through life unblessed rather than ask for what you did not wish to give."

There were tears in Lady Seymour's eyes, but she brushed them hastily aside. Alan did not know they were tears of thankfulness.

"God bless you, my son." She held out her hand, which he clasped for an instant and then raised reverently to his lips. "I knew you were so scrupulously honorable you would never speak unless I gave some sign that you were welcome to do so, but I felt almost as if I were offering myself in marriage. I hope my next son-in-law won't give me such a troublesome task to perform." She was looking at him with such a proud mother-love in her face he did not think the task was causing her much trouble now.

"I trust it may be the last unpleasant task I shall require at your hands," he said, soberly. How seriously he seemed to take the great joy that had come to him; for a great joy she knew it was by the face she had studied and learned to understand so well. "Shall we soon return to Deeplawn? I think you told me just now that you were getting tired of sight-seeing."

"We will turn homeward at once. You will let me call Deeplawn home?"

"If it could only be your home in reality! But we must not ask for everything in this world."

"I think if she consents to accept you she will be content with you alone, much as she loves us all; for she has a true woman's heart."

Alan looked as if this could not be possible, that he could fill the place of all the loved ones she had been with from childhood; but if she would come to him, he knew, as far as his love could do it, he would make her content.

CHAPTER XXV

BETROTHAL

THEY turned their faces homeward, leaving their direct route only for Niagara Falls.

"I may not live to come back to America," Lady Seymour said, playfully, "and I want, before I pass on to other worlds, to see as much of the magnificence of my native planet as possible."

"I hope you may live long enough to go with us to Labrador on some of our hard-earned holidays and see the mammoth waterfall hidden away there," Alan said.

"We never could take ladies over such a route!" Lionel expostulated.

"Certainly not until there is a railway to the spot, but if the accounts of those who have seen it are not exaggerated, some enterprising Yankee will undertake a railway there, probably in our lifetime. Summer excursionists are tiring of the beaten tracks. A trip like that would suit their jaded fancy admirably."

"You seem fond of suggesting, as well as attempting, the impracticable," Lionel retorted.

At Niagara a new experience was added to the already wide repertoire with which Lady Seymour was provided for her journeyings to other worlds. She had, in her younger days, made an excursion to Iceland in her father's yacht, to witness the madcap pranks of nature there; on the same trip had penetrated far inland on those Norwegian fiords; later on had climbed the Alpine peaks and stood within the shadows of the Himalayas and of the Apennines; but never had she so vividly realized our human powerlessness before nature's uncurbed forces as when, in oiled suit, she followed her guide beneath the thunder of waters at Niagara. When they reached the hotel she lay down on the sofa exhausted. After a few moments' silence, she said, reflectively:

"If our planet is ridiculously insignificant in size compared with some of the worlds hanging aloft, it is at least a wonderful piece of mechanism. We need not to be ashamed of our birthplace, do you think, if we compare notes with representatives from the stars when we reach the garden of God? One is not certain how they might regard such things there. I am apt to have all sorts of odd fancies when I lie awake at night," she concluded, with a smile at her own foolishness.

"I seldom lie awake, but when I do it is not any such perplexities about the size of worlds that keeps me from sleeping."

"Ah, Lucia, my child, the other world I know seems so far away from you now, you scarce give a thought how you shall appear there."

"That has given me very many troubled thoughts, mamma; but it is my own individual merits I am anxious about, not my position in that wonderful dwelling-place as a representative from our planet."

"I believe you have distanced me in the argument. Nevertheless, I am glad that I can indulge in justifiable pride of the world I was planted in. It is beautiful, beautiful!" she murmured, softly.

Lucia looked anxiously at the thin, tired face, very glad that the restless, eager spirit was content to turn homeward. She well knew her mother's delicacy of health, and on her account had looked forward to this western journey with more of fear than pleasure. As she saw the white lids presently begin to droop, she beckoned to the others silently, when all save Maude withdrew, leaving her to keep guard while her mother slept. Lionel had letters to write and went to his room. For the first time since his conversation with Lady Seymour, Alan was left alone with Lucia. As they stood on the piazza looking out toward the waterfall, Alan said:

"The first time I was here I found an excellent view of the rapids where one is not so deafened by the roar of the cataract. Will you come with me and see it?"

"With pleasure. It seems a pity to lose a single glimpse of the wonderful scene. I feel like studying its changing moods all the time; it grows upon me, I find, overwhelms me." She shuddered slightly as she spoke.

"I like to come here occasionally. It affects me differently every time. Some day I may find the impression it gives will be the same. We cannot always continue to outgrow our emotions, I presume."

"I have been wondering to-day how the unclothed spirit would regard it—if, indeed, it would have any tangible existence for pure spirit. If so, and I were free, I should like to be in the midst of it, tossing and dashing in its mad play; there could be no fear, only wild enjoyment, under such conditions."

"I am very glad you are not pure spirit, but a real flesh and blood maiden, walking beside me here."

"Do you think that is a generous satisfaction? One might be so much happier in the spiritual state."

"A whole eternity remains for that. There are experiences to be had here that I crave before death passes me on to the next world."

She did not reply, and for some time they walked on in silence. The point to which Alan was turning his steps lay some half-mile or more from the hotel, in the quieter part of Goat Island. He was content to be walking in silence, since he knew, for an hour or two at least, they two would be alone together. When they had reached the spot Lucia found a rustic seat, Alan threw himself on the grass at her feet, and together they silently watched the foaming rapids sweeping by.

"When Lionel and I came here last month, for the first time in my life I gave a serious thought to the thousands of newly married people who have come here. Do you know, Lucia, I hoped the day might come when I too, should take my bride to some rare spot of earth, though it would be matter of supreme indifference to me whether it was one of the fairest or not, so long as the woman I loved was by my side—my wife." Alan was somewhat direct in anything his heart was set upon, and Lucia was not to be wooed by degrees. "Won't it be better still to plight our troth here to-day? You must know my love for you. Do you not love me in return, and will you not take me for better or worse?"

She looked down into the eager, imperious face of the man who was not even suing for her love in orthodox fashion, but seemed to claim it as his right. No other form of wooing would so well have suited her fancy, but she held her peace.

"Lucia, why don't you speak?"

Her eyes fell before the look in his; she was afraid they might tell him too soon what he wanted to know, what she had been afraid he might never know, and yet, with the perversity of her sex, was so slow to confess. "Am I a coquette?" flashed into her mind, as if spoken bodily. She turned her eyes once more to meet the eyes intently watching her, and was startled at the intense pain in their depths. She reached her hand to him.

"What do you want me to do?"

"To be my wife, Lucia, my other better self."

"I can never be your better self, but ——" she hesitated a moment and then added, archly, "I shall never be any other man's wife."

He was holding her hand tightly as he stood now beside her.

"You will be content, Lucia, to be the mate of a common man, who can offer you nothing but a humble name and the truest love? I do not forget that Lionel told me you might one day be a duchess bearing a splendid, historic name—with a history reaching back a thousand years."

"I am going to marry a very uncommon man, better than any duke I ever knew. I shall not need to consider his ancestors, for he will be great enough for me without any help from them."

"We will not talk of greatness. I used to have my dreams, but none of them included such joy as this." He was now standing quietly at her side. He smiled at her as he spoke, and then gazed reflectively across the boiling, turbulent river that rolled near by.

"He is not like other men," Lucia thought, proudly. "He is self-contained, noble, always." She was perfectly content to be standing there at his side in silence. She knew that he loved her as truly as one human being can love another, had loved her from the first, as she had loved him. What a grand life was open for them if God spared them to each other through the coming years; not living selfishly, but continuing the work he had begun; waiting for any task God might appoint; finding the crown of living in serving, not enjoying.

CHAPTER XXVI

MRS. DIXON'S SUGGESTIONS

ALAN found Lady Seymour awake when they returned, and considerably rested. He asked to see her alone, and Maude withdrew, looking somewhat mystified.

"Can anything be wrong?" she asked her sister. "Mr. Rivers came in with a very bright face and requested a private interview with mamma. Does he want to marry one of us?"

"Mamma, I am sure, will tell you later on."

"I do not think she will need to. Your face seems to have the same kind of expression that his had. He is no doubt a very fine man, personally, but for one who has had the refusal of a duke it does not strike me as a particularly brilliant offer."

"He is worth a thousand of that little lisping creature." Lucia's cheeks were now very red.

"Nevertheless any one in her senses would prefer the title."

"I am ashamed of you, Maude. I never felt so honored in my life as when I learned that such a man as Alan Rivers saw something in me worth loving—that he wanted me with him forever."

"You don't say so!" was the half-mocking reply, as Maude swept a courtly bow. "At least my preference for the duke has gained me a fair statement of what has happened." And she laughed as she left the room.

Alan, when he found himself alone with Lady Seymour spoke at once of what was uppermost in his mind.

"Lucia has consented to be my wife. Will you continue your superb kindness by giving me my wife very soon?"

"Ah, you take my breath away! You must learn patience. Her father will not oppose you, I am certain, but he must be duly consulted. There are also the dressmakers and milliners, and all the train of people who deck our brides, whose help must be secured.

"I would be happy to take her in the gown she wears to-day. What do I care for the frippery? It is herself I want."

"We could not let our daughter be married away from Wyndhurst; that has been the rule of our house for some hundreds of years, and her father must give her away."

Alan bowed silently to the decision. Lady Seymour smiled. She liked his rugged wooing; he was always true to himself, and in this, as in everything, his peculiar characteristics were apparent.

"You will make it as early as possible when you return to England? I shall not spend any more time at the universities, at least not for some years. My life-work must begin now in earnest."

"Have you decided to be a clergyman?"

"Yes."

"Have you spoken to Lucia on the subject?

"No. Remember we were only betrothed an hour ago; but Lucia will not object."

"I am sure she will think that whatever you wish is the best, for you will marry a friend as well as sweetheart."

"Shall I have your promise to hasten it? I have been alone so many years I am impatient."

"You may rest assured that I will place no unnecessary obstacles in your way; but we must give our daughter a suitable wedding—the amenities of social life demand it."

Alan could not help wishing for more primitive customs, and remembered with some dismay the elaborate ceremony to which he must submit.

They returned at once to Deeplawn, where they remained a week before leaving for England. Alan was to follow them later. The wedding day was set early in December, and the remainder of that year and part of the winter they were to spend on the continent. Lucia with her parents and sister had not only visited the principal points of interest in European travel, but had also turned aside from the beaten track and explored out-of-the-way places ; hence Alan could have no better guide.

Mrs. Dixon was now perplexed over the question, if Alan was to become a minister on his return where was he to find a church ? The little chapel at Deeplawn was surely not large enough to satisfy so energetic a worker. One evening when he had stepped into her sitting room to discuss some business arrangement, she asked :

"Will you live here after your marriage ?"

"I shall certainly come here, but what my marching orders will be I do not know."

"How in the world will you know unless you look a little sharp after it yourself? A preacher ought to have a church."

"If it is necessary for me to have one, the church will be forthcoming, never fear. I have no more anxiety about it than the birds have about next year's harvest."

"That seems to me a curious way to take things. I would say you ought to do something yourself."

"That is what I have been busy at the last ten years, preparing for whatever work God may appoint for me, in the meantime taking hold of any duty that presents itself as I go along, and not waiting for some great service that may never come to me. The wisest way I find, is to balance each day's accounts, as far as possible, at each day's close."

"I would like to see you settled at something definite. Now if you could get one of those great New York churches where there'd be hundreds turned away every Sunday for want of room, and have your sermons put in the morning papers! I don't want you to be one of the little, common kind of preachers that you scarcely hear mentioned outside of their own church or neighborhood."

"You think to be popular is a minister's chief call?" Alan said.

"I want folks to know about you all over the country. There must be a few popular ones, and you have as good a chance as the best. I am sure you have had every opportunity; and Lady Seymour says you have great ability, that there is only one here and there among the millions that is quite your equal; but if you don't try yourself, I'm afraid you'll never be known."

"I shall never try, you may be sure of that. It will not be myself that I shall preach or uplift, and it will not matter to me if my name never gets into the papers. Indeed, I should much prefer not to have it mentioned. I have other work to do. God helping me I shall keep my heart free from such vanities."

Mrs. Dixon' face wore a very dissatisfied expression. In some ways Alan was a very disappointing individual. She had never before, since he was a lad, so far interfered in his affairs; but she had an instinctive feeling that she might criticise him as a preacher, since that is a privilege people generally take. For Alan, the martyrdom of criticism would be harmless, as it might be for all preachers.

"It is of no use talking to him," she grumbled, after the door had closed between them. "He's that masterful about what he calls duty, one might as well talk to a post. Anyway, I guess his wife will be ambitious for him, and wives can persuade when no other living creature can. Besides, since she's a great lady, it will help him powerfully. There's a sight of attention paid to birth and money in the churches as well as out of them." Mrs. Dixon breathed a sigh of relief as she reflected on this, and presently dismissed her anxieties about Alan's popularity as a preacher from her mind.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GREAT DEEP

ALAN had many tasks planned for the weeks intervening between their return to Deeplawn and his marriage. The interior of the house had undergone but little change in five and twenty years. Everything was now old-fashioned. Though the furniture was originally of the best material and workmanship, and in an excellent state of preservation, yet even Alan could not help thinking that Lucia might reasonably expect an entire renovation of the house. The choicest upholstery on the continent would not suit his fancy half so well as the old-fashioned furniture that he remembered from childhood, but with Lucia it might be different.

He regretted the money it would take to do this. The amount necessary to furnish it throughout would build and fit a house in the West large enough to lodge a score of boys. At last he decided to submit his perplexities to Lucia. They were alone in the library when he made his explanation. She listened silently while he was speaking, he wishing meanwhile that she would make some suggestion since he feared that she might not understand his motives and think it was lack of respect that led him to bring his bride to Deeplawn without making even such preparations for her home-coming as one of less dignity might reasonably expect. He paused for a moment and said then deprecatingly:

"If I have pained you with my apparent lack of generosity, I want you to forgive me. I have not the refined tastes that your husband should have; you have a rough blundering fellow to deal with; but I want you to train me mercilessly. I will try to do your bidding, to anticipate your every wish."

There was a rueful, pleading look on the handsome face that was intently studying her varying expression.

"I will never train you. Rather I will do all in my power to keep you just as you are. I do not want my husband to be a conventional carpet-knight. In regard to refurnishing this house, I like it much better as it is, old-fashioned and homelike, with memories of your boyhood about it. I sit thinking that it was here you indulged your youthful dreams and ambitions in which I bore no part, and now you care more for me than for all else. Is not that so?"

She looked up at him a little doubtfully, as if even yet she could hardly believe that she had the first place in his heart. His answer reassured her, although he was not much given to protestations or caresses.

"I do not know if mamma has told you that I have a fortune in my own right from my godmother."

"It has never occurred to me whether you owned a dollar. I have not even thought of marriage settlements or money in connection with you."

She smiled at the indifference with which he spoke of what would have been of very considerable interest to the generality of men.

"I am glad for your sake that I have money. We can do so much more to further your benevolent plans."

"Your money must be left in your own country. I wish to support my wife to the last dollar—to have her all my own."

"We won't trouble ourselves about it now; sufficient to the future are the perplexities that may come."

Alan did, however, fit up the suite of rooms specially appropriated for his bride, following his own instincts, to the surprise of the work-people who came to execute his orders. There was nothing conventional about it, but when the work was completed, and they surveyed their labor as a whole, they honestly acknowledged that the blending of colors, and the effect of the different articles of furniture showed a finer artistic effect than they could achieve.

"You would make your fortune in no time at furnishing," the foreman said, admiringly. "I tell you, sir, brains make their mark everywhere."

Alan look around the remodeled rooms and concluded something had made them different from the average, but was not aware if it were superior brains or loving care that had wrought the harmony.

This task completed he started for the West, taking James Longman with him, for he wished to settle the colony of boys on which his heart had been so long set, and for which he had denied himself many a luxury. He had secured a large tract of wild land, and soon completed his plans for buildings, and for laying out the estate. Longman, who had a natural faculty for carpentering, was installed master builder. They did not seek for much effect; utility and comfort were what they desired. Hence expensive workmen were not needed.

Alan often detected himself painting rose-colored pictures of this place in his imagination, as he attempted to look into the future. Young men and maidens were to grow up here to strong, pure careers, who otherwise would be useless drift-wood on life's current. The life God had given to him seemed as complete and rich as he could wish. Work was his that angels might covet, opportunities for splendid service were stretching out in the coming years; his life as a whole was divinely ordered, yet in perfect harmony with his own desires; and the woman he loved was waiting for him to claim her. He used to pause beside the workmen—rough, unkempt fellows some of them were—and wonder why he had so much more than they, a great pity filling his heart because they and all mankind could not enjoy similar gifts; but he hoped that in some other life they might not lag so far behind their fellows.

Matters satisfactorily arranged here, he went to New York, setting sail at once for Wyndhurst, where already grand preparations had been begun for the approaching marriage.

The voyage proved a stormy one from the beginning. The November skies were leaden the day they started, and the huge steamship seemed to groan remonstrance against fronting the mighty billows the stormy Atlantic can roll up. Alan was one of the few passengers able to keep his feet. After a day or two there was on each face, from the commander to the smallest cabin boy, an expression of anxiety, although they were well used to these tumultuous moods of the sea at this season.

Alan used to station himself in some comparatively safe part of the deck and watch the weird scene about him, while he reflected on the millions of human beings whom the sea had engulfed since the first voyager ventured his life thereon, sometimes wondering anxiously, if his fate should be like theirs would the work that he had planned with such care go on? Would Lucia, after a natural period of grieving, wed some other man? Such a course would be perfectly natural, since men and women in all conditions of life are wont to do this, even after marriage has made them one. Would she one day be a duchess, bringing to her work in the by-ways of the world the splendor of her high position and historic name? It was not a pleasant train of thought, this of fancying Lucia another man's wife while he lay forgotten in the awful depths of this merciless sea. From such reveries he would start for a hasty inspection of the weather, perhaps waylaying some official for a few brief words, but these were not reassuring.

So the time wore on until one night he was wakened from dreams of home and boyhood by the sudden cessation of the ship's machinery. He well knew what that meant.

He dressed quickly, but carefully. His night lamp had been kept burning several nights in case of some such emergency. There was unusual commotion on deck, hurrying feet, and the loud, sharp command that could be heard above the roar of the tempest. Alan hesitated for a moment as he was strapping on his life-preserver, since it might mean only a lingering agony if he lay floating on the billows.

"I will live as long as I can, every hour of life adds so much to my chances for rescue," he said half aloud, as he buckled the last strap securely.

Leaving his stateroom fully equipped for either a tussle with the ocean or a lingering waiting on a crowded boat, he went at once on deck. Stewards and stewardesses were passing swiftly from room to room, rousing any who might be sleeping, and calling all to make immediate preparation for the boats. He found on reaching the deck that there would be room for all in the boats. There were many pale faces gathering on the deck, but most of the passengers belonged to the class early trained to self-repression, and consequently held themselves under good control. But a close observer could detect the same passion of fear in the rigid muscles and ashen cheek as in the loud lamentations of others.

The huge steamship was slowly settling in the trough of the sea. Her shaft was broken, and her hull so injured that no skill of the carpenters and engineers could remedy it sufficiently for her to continue her contest with the elements. Mingled with anxieties for himself and fellow-passengers

Alan felt a sensation akin to pity for the vessel that had fought so bravely, but was now being slowly swallowed by the greedy sea. As he watched her slowly settling, he questioned a passenger who stood beside him, gloomily surveying the scene. Across the stormy waves a line of gray light was glimmering in the east, foregleam of a day that might be their last on earth.

"Is there any chance for safety in one of those?" Alan pointed to the boats which the seamen were preparing to lower.

"It is the only chance. Before the sun completes one-half its journey across the sky to-day, this ship will be a hundred fathoms below the surface." He shuddered as he spoke. "But I would rather go down in her than face that turbulent swell in those cockle shells. It is death in any case, but one will be short and sharp, and I prefer that."

"If we must go down, it matters little as to the way," Alan said calmly.

"I see you are one of the religious kind. They usually take these things calmly. I have had experience in them. I have been shipwrecked before."

"I am glad you can bear such good testimony to their courage. Is it not strange that with your experience you are not one yourself?"

"Yes." The answer came with a groan.

Alan forgot the extremity of his own case as he reasoned with his companion, urging him, then and there, to yield his will, his entire being, to God.

"It is too late," was the one despairing cry.

By this time all the boats but two had been lowered, and the crew came now to the boat near which Alan had been quietly standing. He did not know, because of the confusion, whether all the boats on the other side of the vessel had gotten off safely, but knew that some had succeeded. There remained on board only enough sailors to man the two boats, a group of the most timid and perhaps the very bravest of the passengers, and the gallant chief officers; in all, no more than the two boats could easily hold. Excellent discipline had been preserved, and the steamer had settled so slowly that there had been plenty of time for the embarkation.

"It is of no use for them to try, they might as well stay here and all go down together," the gentleman by Alan's side said, hopelessly.

"I shall fight for my life to the last moment of conscious existence," Alan said, as his keen eye watched the rapid movements of the men and noted their rough skill.

When the supplies had been put in and the boat swung out on the davits, the seamen took their places at the oars and the last of the passengers were called to get in. But the timid ones hesitated. Women, some of whom had scarcely been allowed to feel a rough wind, shrank back with terror, while even men grew pale as they looked first at the frail boat and then at the wild waves.

Alan then stepped forward, and with encouraging words seconded the officers' efforts to get the little group, chiefly of women, safely into the boat. Among them was a stout lady who had been bewailing her fate in a stentorian voice at intervals, and a pale-faced little woman who had been perfectly silent from the first. She faced the appalling spectacle with a shuddering, indrawn breath, but gave no other sign. Several additional life-preservers had been thrown into the boat, along with the canned meats, biscuits, and kegs of water. As soon as she was seated in the boat, the stout lady chanced to see the life-preservers, and instantly begged to have an additional one strapped about her voluminous person. She had loaded herself well with jewelry and her cargo was valuable, even if her individual self would be little missed. Alan waited until there were no more who would enter that boat, and at the last moment, before he climbed in himself, made one more effort to persuade the man with whom he had been talking, to go also ; but he and a few others were determined to stay with the steamer.

The boat was safely lowered, and then the last of the crew and officers rushed to the other boat and were quickly off.

They were making every effort now to get as far as possible from the ship, which was sinking more rapidly. The day was breaking, so that when the boat was lifted on the crest of a wave, they could quite distinctly see the figures still grouped on the deck, who had elected to remain with the ship. Alan fancied he could see them beckoning the boats to return for them; perhaps too late they had concluded there might be a possibility of escaping and were anxious to try their chances with the rest. He begged the sailors to return and take all that their boat could safely carry, but his request was received in silence. Again he urged, when one of the men said:

"It's too late, sir. They've had their chance, and we'd only all on us get swamped."

The stout lady shrieked with terror, while Alan, disheartened, watched for every glimpse possible of his late fellow-voyagers. The boat was suddenly tossed more fiercely than ever, while the sailors barely kept her from overturning.

"I guess that's the sea that took the steamer down," one of them said, when the worst of the danger was over; and sure enough, when they rose on the next wave there was nothing to be seen but the sky and the sea. Alan urged the crew to go back, for possibly some might come again to the surface, buoyed up by their life-preservers.

"It's no use," an old tar said, moodily. "They'll all be drowned before they see daylight again, the ship'll carry them so far down with her. The suction's powerful strong when a big steamship goes down, I can tell ye."

"We can at least go and see," Alan said.

The boat was turned carefully and they proceeded toward the spot, but nothing could be seen. The day grew clearer. Across the waters a few gleams of sunshine were stealing, while the wind certainly was blowing less furiously.

"Why don't you row for land?" the stout lady said, querulously. "What's the use beating round in one spot?"

"Well, ma'am, for one reason we're about a thousand miles from land, near as I can make out, and us fellers 'd find that a pretty longish row, specially in this sea." The sailor grinned as he spoke.

A scream of despair was her only reply.

"Never you fret, lady. We're in the track of the winter steamers. If we can hold on for a day or two, some of 'em'll maybe pick us up."

"You don't mean to say you are going to keep us in this nasty little boat all that time?"

"Not ag'in yer will, madame. We'll h'ist ye overboard whenever ye gives the word."

The lady searched for her pocket handkerchief, but it had been left behind.

"Whatever shall I do? All my good clothes are gone too. What shall I do when I get to land?"

"It's my opinion yer standin' a poor chance of gettin' there. Appearances is that ye'll be a follerin' of yer good clothes afore many days."

"Oh, you dreadful creature! Didn't you tell us a steamer was coming this way?"

"Maybe them that's out has all gone down like our own. In that case we'll hev to wait till some others start from shore. By that time ye'll hev fretted yerself to death, and may be we'll have et ye, bein' as vittels ain't none too plentiful."

The stout lady moaned despairingly, but Alan interposed to comfort her. At eight o'clock food was handed around. Only one tin cup had been supplied, but even the most fastidious gladly took their turn.

"It is like a love-feast, only we do not have the experiences." It was the little gentle-faced woman who spoke, while she smiled as cheerfully as if they were a picnic party out on a quest for pleasure.

"Haven't you any one to fret about you if you should never be heard from?" the stout lady inquired.

"Yes, my husband in India would grieve, and my four children in America would miss a mother's love and prayers, but whatever happens will be all right." She smiled placidly as she spoke, as if it were all life, here or in other worlds, and it mattered little where one might be as long as they were about God's work.

Alan now took his Bible from his pocket, and for an hour or more read from its pages and talked to his little audience of less than a dozen, more earnestly perhaps than he had ever done to any audience in his life. Even the sailors sometimes leaned on their oars to listen. Then he relieved one of the sailors at the oars. The man lay down wearily and was soon fast asleep in the bottom of the boat. At noon the food was again passed around, but there was little eaten, except by the men at the oars.

The short day began to wane. Although well supplied with wraps, all save the rowers were blue with the cold, while the weary faces that looked out over the tossing sea were sufficient to dishearten the most cheerful. Now and then a quavering hymn broke from the lips of the little lady. They had all exchanged names, and acquainted each other with their places of abode. Her name was Manning. She and her husband were missionaries, who had been home on furlough. He had gone to England a few weeks before, on the journey to his field of toil, but she had remained in

America with her children as long as possible. She was leaving them with her parents and was naturally a little heavy-hearted at the long separation that must ensue before she would see them once more.

The night closed in thickly about them. Alan changed his place and took a seat beside the brave little missionary, whose courage showed no signs of faltering. Screening her as well as he could from the wind, he drew the tired head against his arm, and in a little while was glad to find that she had forgotton her sorrows in the blessed oblivion of sleep. The night wore on, as the longest nights are wont to do, until the dark hour just before the dawn, when all, save the men at the oars, were nodding on their seats.

Suddenly a cry startled them: "Ship ahoy!" In an instant the drowsiest was wide-awake and joining the general call for help as the huge steamship came steadily toward them. Their cries were unheard as they might have known they would be in the sob and swell of wind and sea and the creaking of the ship's machinery. The boat was caught in the swell caused by the vessel, as she forged steadily past them, forcing the men at the oars to increased activity to save themselves from being engulfed.

Alan's courage began to fail him, while life had never seemed so precious as now. The men settled doggedly to their oars and for some time there was unbroken silence. When the day broke each was shocked at the haggard appearance of his fellow-voyagers. Mrs. Paxton, the stout lady, had collapsed utterly and lay a disheveled heap on a pile of rugs, but Mrs. Manning bore up cheerily. Even the sailors, inured to the dangers of the sea, seemed to draw courage from her.

Precisely on the hour, Alan passed around the food which he called breakfast. All partook except Mrs. Paxton. She had reached that speechless state of misery not far removed from loss of reason. Another day began to wear away. From certain symptoms the little company began to grow uneasy about Mrs. Paxton. Although apparently so full of robust health she was standing the strain the poorest of any. Another night's exposure might extinguish the flame of life that was already flickering feebly.

The sea was comparatively calm now, the November sun shining quite brilliantly, and every eye, save Mrs. Paxton's, was scanning the far horizon for signs of steamship or sailing vessel. Several times on the distant rim dividing sea and sky they saw white sails dipping out of sight. Four o'clock was on them. Soon night would close in, another dreary night, worse than the last because their strength was farther spent. Even the little missionary grew faint-hearted.

Suddenly, up from the world of waters, another steamship loomed, and oh, joy! their boat lay in her track. Alan was the tallest in the boat. The rowers held her as steadily on the course as possible, while he stood in the prow holding up an oar with a rug fastened to it, as high as he could reach. How feverishly they watched the sun sinking low toward the horizon and the on-coming steamship! Which would travel fastest? If not seen before sunset, the twilight was so short they would scarcely be noticed, a little darkening speck on the wide, dim sea. Mrs. Manning quickly saw that they must have a white signal.

"How shall we get one?" Alan asked, anxiously.

A faint tinge crept into the wan cheek, but she said bravely: "I put on my dress over my night-dress. I will give you that."

Soon her snowy garment was spread. It had not swung from the oar five minutes when a puff of smoke burst from the ship's side, and a little later the glad reverberation struck their ears.

"Was there ever such music as that in all the world?" Mrs. Manning said, bursting into tears.

"Ye needn't fret now, you dear little woman. It was you that saved us all," a rough sailor said, with a quiver in his voice. The steamer was bearing swiftly down upon them, but Alan still swung his signal aloft, until an answering flag was unfurled, which the seamen knew meant certain rescue. The sun was dipping out of sight. Would the daylight last until they were rescued?

Mrs. Manning had dried her eyes and was watching the ship with a pink glow on the pinched face. The sailors did not know it was gratitude to her all-powerful Father that had caused that burst of weeping. It had eased her full heart, and now she could have sung for very gladness, only she was so chilled and faint.

Mrs. Paxton was aroused sufficiently to raise her head and emit deep groans at frequent intervals, while she watched the shadows of evening settling between them and deliverance.

"However am I to get hoisted up into the ship?" she questioned, plaintively.

"That'll be the easiest of our troubles if once we get near enough to give you a pull," a sailor responded, cheerfully. Presently the steamer's whistles began to blow.

"That'll make us safe if it gets pitch dark. It don't make the leastest odds which on us finds t'other as long's it's done," a dark-browed sailor remarked, complacently.

Presently they were close enough to see that the huge black hull was waiting motionless for them in mid-ocean. Here was human life in peril, and nowhere does life seem more precious than to the toilers on the sea.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE END

WHEN Alan reached New York, for the rescuing steamer was westward bound, he cabled at once to Wyndhurst. The day that was to have been his wedding day was spent at sea, but he managed to preserve an outward calm, although his spirit fretted at the pain and suspense his absence must be causing. Mrs. Manning decided to re-embark with him on the next steamer, but Mrs. Paxton had assured them all a good many times each day that no money could tempt her to brave an Atlantic voyage again, unless in midsummer.

The second trip was so stormy that even Mrs. Manning used to scan the seamen's faces and the sky with evident anxiety, but they reached Liverpool in good time. Alan, without a moment's delay, hastened to Wyndhurst. The wedding feast would be stale by this time, but so much the better if thereby he might escape the infliction of a grand wedding. Indeed, he would not hold shipwrecks an unmitigated evil if they procured that gain.

He was received as one alive from the dead.

Lucia had endeavored to be brave, but had suffered severely from the days of suspense. Lady Seymour hovered around, and mothered him so tenderly he assured her it would be worth while to have periodic escapes from similar dangers to enjoy such tender solacement. To his dismay he found that the marriage state was to be in no wise abated.

He breathed a sigh of relief when at last all the grand display of silks and laces, precious stones and costly viands, had passed into history, and he and Lucia were permitted to start out alone to take the honeymoon that married lovers look back upon in after years. He had met all the great people of the country, the wide circle of relatives whom the clergyman's words had made his own, and was received by them with a charming cordiality, not altogether due to the fact that he was Lady Seymour's son-in-law.

The young couple were back in London the last of the winter, Lucia quite as anxious as Alan to get home to Deeplawn, to take up in earnest their life-work together. All sorts of dire predictions were made by their friends as to the misfortunes that would befall them if they ventured to cross the ocean in March, bnt the trip was phenomenally calm.

Extensive preparations for their home-coming were being made at Deeplawn. Wedding presents of every conceivable shape and variety were being manufactured, and suitable wearing apparel was being secured, in which the donors were to personally present their offerings.

The day they arrived was one of those inspiring ones March happily mixes in with its storms—bright sunshine, with the wind blowing from the northwest, with exquisite cloud-forms floating like joyous, living things across the blue dome, their shadows sweeping hillside and sea.

They came in the train which reached Deeplawn station in mid-afternoon. Every one of Alan's tenants old enough to leave the cradle, with all his boys from far and near, was waiting to do him honor. Even Mrs. Dixon unbent from her usual aloofness so far as to make one in the company of his employees and beneficiaries.

Lucia responded with a cordial grace that charmed them all, to their friendly overtures. There were many shining faces and bright eyes in the gathering. Every lad was prepared to welcome and love the new mistress of Deeplawn equally with its master.

A grand feast had been prepared by Mrs. Dixon and her staff, in which she had been ambitious to outshine the chef of the previous year, and Lucia's warm encomiums at the close of the feast left her nothing further to desire.

After a short stay at Deeplawn, the spirit of un-rest, or rather, longing to be in real work, drew Alan to the West. When he reached Riverbank, the name the boys had chosen for their home, he found his presence was sorely needed. James Longman had been absent only a few weeks, but in that time the seeds of disloyalty had been quite widely sown. The man left in charge was possessed of an unfortunate temperament, although in every other respect admirably suited for the position.

Alan was quick to decide in such matters. The individual was sacrificed at once for the general good. He had no false views of mercy, since he believed in the wisdom of seeking the greatest good of the greatest number. This made him slow to work with large numbers in any enterprise. He believed that incompetent persons were too often retained in positions for which they were wholly unqualified because of false pity or personal influence. Lucia was amazed at the swiftness, as well as clearness of his judgments. Even when he impressed her as being stern, she was still confident that he was right.

Before long she was fully as enthusiastic as he over this Western enterprise, which was restored to prosperity by Alan's securing a suitable superintendent, and was beginning to think that the work here and at Deeplawn, including the settlement in life of all these boys and girls and the supervision of the extensive properties, was quite enough for any man; but as the months wore on she found that Alan was not reasonable in the amount of work he planned for himself.

"We should call you a merciless taskmaster if it were another than yourself that you compelled to work so hard," she said to him once, by way of remonstrance.

"It is because so many are idle that the few must bear heavy burdens; besides, we can pass this way but once. That thought makes life tremendously solemn to me."

"And yet you seem joyous in your work. I never saw any one more so."

"I can only be content when working to my utmost. You are not tired of a working-man for your husband? You knew what I was, Lucia, when you took me 'for better, for worse.' I hope you are not finding it has been for worse." There was anxiety and pain in both face and voice as he stood looking down so tenderly into her sweet face.

"It has been all for better. I would not have you different from what you are, not the very slightest, if I could." She turned and kissed the hand pressing lightly on her shoulder.

"Then we are supremely happy. Should we not give much when so much has been given us?"

"Yes." The answer was uttered softly. Sometimes Lucia felt as if Christ himself were speaking to her in some mysterious way through her husband's words. She certainly knew that he dwelt farther within the divine presence than any one she ever knew.

Sometimes he came to her with a perplexed look on his face, and always at such times with an open letter in his hand. She grew at last to understand the token—some pastorless church was seeking him for its minister. Now it was a fashionable city church that offered as inducement a large salary; and then a run-down charge desiring a brilliant preacher to fill its empty pews; or occasionally a mission chapel, to which had come rumors of his wealth and work, besought him to come to its relief. Unfortunately there were so many messages of this kind, he concluded Providence had nothing to do in the matter, but was calling him to a new work of his own.

Lucia was first consulted and later on Lady Seymour, both of whom gave him hearty encouragement in the enterprise. The thought had been slowly developing in his mind that more might be accomplished if he became pastor and patron of his own mission, drawing around him a band of helpers who would be responsible to himself alone, although walking in conjunction with an established church. He planned to have his church self-supporting if possible; neither was it to be the church of the rich or of the poor exclusively, but rather a meeting-place where the different classes could learn their common brotherhood and impart to each other their varied experiences and views of life's meanings and aims.

Three years saw this dream partly realized, and promising to become the most successful enterprise that he had yet attempted. The modest chapel on a quiet street in the great city had been outgrown, and a massive down-town church that had been kept in operation by its congregation at a ruinous cost, considering what it was accomplishing, had been rented for a term of years, and in due time a large and influential church keeping the New Testament order, was established, whose power was ever increasing.

Deeplawn was still the real home of Alan and Lucia, although modest apartments had been rented near to the church. These were made the headquarters for the work generally. All their plans were made here, while workers who needed a few days' rest found it a happy asylum in which to recuperate their energies, expended in that most exhausting work, wrestling with the sins and weaknesses of the dark places of a great city.

The long vacated nursery at Deeplawn echoed again to the merry shouts of childish voices. Another Rex and his baby brother Alan had started on their long journey through the eternities. The father, as he looked into the innocent face of his first-born, would ask himself: Was there any possibility of this little lad making shipwreck of life as that other Rex had done? To save him from that he would gladly see the white lids close in the sleep of death; but he did not fear such a fate for his boy. With God's help, he and his noble wife, loved more than when led as a bride to the altar, hoped to train their own and many another child to lives of noble Christian service. For this he lived and labored, and in such work he found a joy divine.

THE END

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